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A study of the experience of listening to music in World War Two Britain

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis provides new insights into the experience of listening to music during the Second World War in Britain. It explores the different types of listening practised by individuals who encountered a variety of 'serious', 'light' and 'popular' music in diverse wartime circumstances, both live and via technological media. The thesis analyses unpublished diaries and letters written during the war, in which listeners reported on and interpreted their listening experiences. It examines letters written to the BBC about broadcast music; the 'bulletins' written by Lionel Bradley about classical concerts in London; and diary entries about popular music, dancing and the cinema written by Frank Lewis and several Mass Observation diarists. These analyses are complemented by the examination of professional reviews of popular and classical music published in *Melody Maker*, *The Times*, *The Listener*, *The Observer* and *The Manchester Guardian*. Three central questions guide the research: how did people experience listening to music during the Second World War? To what extent were these different listening experiences shaped and influenced by the war? How did the listeners relate to a variety of notions, including musical taste, the judgement of musical value, musical community and identity? This study focuses on a period previously overlooked by histories of listening; and provides a new listener-oriented perspective on musical culture on the Home Front in World War Two Britain. It argues that the war had a considerable material effect on the circumstances of the listeners' experiences, but that wartime did not necessarily affect their engagement with or response to the music. It therefore provides new insights into historical listening experiences and the musical landscape of the Second World War, while also making a significant contribution to the methodology of historical listening studies.

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List of Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBCSO	BBC Symphony Orchestra
BBC WAC	British Broadcasting Corporation Written Archives Centre
CEMA	Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts
ENSA	Entertainments National Service Association
GFP	General Forces Programme
LED	Listening Experience Database
LPO	London Philharmonic Orchestra
LSO	London Symphony Orchestra
MO	Mass Observation
MO FR	Mass Observation File Report
<i>MYWY</i>	<i>Music While You Work</i>
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAH	Royal Albert Hall
RPS	Royal Philharmonic Society

Editorial Practices

Bibliographic Conventions

In-text archival references are abbreviated to their class mark (unless indicated otherwise), and referenced as follows:

- **BBC Written Archives:** author, date of letter/document, file number.
- **Lionel Bradley Archive:** date of bulletin, LJHB 02/booklet number.
- **Frank Lewis Collection:** date of diary entry, D51/diary number.
- **Mass Observation:** date of diary entry, diarist number; file report number, title, date.
- **Newspapers and journals:** article title, *periodical*, author (if known), date.

Transcriptions

The primary source material contains handwritten and typeset documents. In transcription, the idiosyncrasies of the original documents have been retained as far as possible, as they often affect the meaning of the text and demonstrate the literacy of the listeners, as well as the effort they made to express their thoughts and experiences. This includes spelling mistakes, punctuation and grammar, abbreviations, crossing out, additions, corrections and other amendments.

Editorial markings have been kept to a minimum. Square brackets [] have been used to indicate editorial clarifications where the original words are obscured and to enclose editorial ellipses, and unclear letters are represented by a dash -. Where the original documents use square brackets (occasionally found within the Lionel Bradley documents), a note makes this clear.

Terminology

Where relevant, terminology from the period has been adopted in the thesis, particularly if listeners themselves use it. Examples include: 'serious' music (classical music) and 'the wireless' (the radio).

Introduction

On 2 November 1939, two months after the declaration of the Second World War, an article appeared in *The Listener* written by Sir Kenneth Clark, Director of the National Gallery, where a new and immediately successful lunchtime concert series had been started by Myra Hess just three weeks before on 10 October. Clarke wrote:

The first concert was given by Miss Hess herself, and the moment when she played the opening bars of Beethoven's 'Appassionata' will always remain for me one of the great experiences of my life; it was an assurance that all our sufferings are not in vain. I think the whole audience felt this, for I have never known people listen so earnestly, nor applaud with such a rush of pent up emotion and gratitude.¹

Another review wrote about the event on similar lines:

I went on Tuesday to the first of the National Gallery war-time concerts. An amazing experience. All sorts of people [...] A few, perhaps, were there out of curiosity, but most of them because they were suffering from a raging thirst for music, for tranquillity re-collected through emotion, and for some assurance of pattern and order in a jangled world. She played magnificently and thoughtfully, almost as she were discovering – no, *uncovering* – the music for the first time. Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms – ironical, isn't it, how the world has to turn to the great Germans to find healing for the spiritual wounds inflicted on it by the ignoble ones? There were so many people in tears that it might have been a revivalist meeting. So it was, in a way. And the curious thing was that everything she played seemed to have a kind of double loveliness, as though she had managed to distil into it all the beauty of the pictures that were missing from the walls. It was quite unforgettable.²

The outbreak of war in September had caused the British government to close sites of entertainment and leisure throughout the country, including theatres, concert halls, cinemas and dance halls, in anticipation of immediate air raids. This resulted in 'the cancellation of important autumn festivals and completely disorganised the musical machine in London'.³ Hess's new concert series marked part of the tentative revival of live classical music in wartime restricted London (concerts resumed on 24 September with the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) with

¹ Sir Kenneth Clark, 'Concerts in the National Gallery', *The Listener*, 02/11/39, 884.

² Unidentified review with no title or date, preserved as a clipping within the Bradley bulletins alongside the bulletin for 10/10/39, LJHB 02/039.

³ *The Times*, 01/01/40.

Myra Hess performing at the Queen's Hall, alongside recitals at the Wigmore Hall).⁴ By November 1939, the National Gallery series had 'already proved the most successful musical venture of the war period'.⁵

These quotations demonstrate how one of the most popular and persevering musical images of the Second World War was born (successfully and enduringly) just weeks into the conflict, at a time when the reality of war had yet to reach the Home Front. Myra Hess playing Beethoven in the National Gallery in front of a rapt multi-class audience (discussed in Chapter 5) is a popular modern image of wartime musical leisure, now steeped in decades of meaning and remembrance. It was an image also perpetuated during the Second World War, for example by Humphrey Jennings's short propaganda film *Listen to Britain*, which features an iconic sequence of Hess performing Mozart at the National Gallery, accompanied by a Royal Air Force orchestra, in the presence of the Queen.⁶ This image is also one which finds a regular revival in much of the scholarship of the wartime period throughout the last fifty years, particularly with reference to the ongoing myth of the 'people's war' (discussed below).⁷ Images such as this have come to epitomise the very nature of the experience of music in the Second World War, and the core of many of the issues, dichotomies and ideologies that dominated the provision of music to the general listening public throughout World War Two.

The two quotations above, drawn from professional reviews of the concert, purposefully and persuasively emphasise the emotional power of this exceptional musical experience. They invoke the concept of a culturally starved and grateful public 'suffering from a raging thirst for music', and the reassuring order and power of (classical) music to remind listeners of beauty and all that they would be fighting for. The contentious use of German music is raised, and wartime, wounds and suffering are given a prominent place, despite little having happened yet, suggesting that memories of the First World War and the ongoing European conflict were influential. Most of all, these reviews paint a portrait of wartime musical experience as deeply emotional and spiritual. These are all tropes which fed wartime myths about music, but there is also a kernel of truth to them which finds an echo in some of the written experiences of wartime listeners (discussed below).

⁴ Mentioned in Lionel Bradley, 07/1039, LJHB 02/039; Philip Zeigler, *London at War, 1939–1945* (London: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).

⁵ W.R. Anderson, 'Notes and News', *The Musical Times*, November 1939, 773–4.

⁶ Humphrey Jennings, *Listen to Britain* (1942). See also John Morris, 'Battle for Music: Music and British Wartime Propaganda 1935–1945' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Exeter, 2011); J. Leach, 'The Poetics of Propaganda: Humphrey Jennings and "Listen to Britain"', in *Documenting the Documentary*, ed. B.K. Grant and K. Sloniowski (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998).

⁷ For example, in Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain 1939–45* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969), 372–4.

This thesis is about discovering how people listened and experienced music in wartime Britain, and what listening meant to them. By stripping back the decades of meaning and tropes and examining authentic experiences of individual listeners written at the time,⁸ it seeks to place the listener at the centre of the investigation into wartime musical life, expose the reality of experiencing music and provide an understanding of individual engagement with the musical landscape. This study turns not only to extraordinary events such as Hess' first National Gallery concert, but also to experiences of the broad variety of musical activity across wartime Britain. It aims to demonstrate how everyday experiences really related to the grand ideas, broad brushstrokes and preserved images that have dominated references to wartime listening.

This thesis explores the experience of listening to music during the Second World War in Britain through the eyes, ears and pens of ordinary members of the British listening public. It primarily makes use of a body of little-researched, unpublished diaries and letters written during the wartime period, in which listeners report on and interpret their experiences of music. It seeks to understand the nature of these experiences, paying particular attention to the interests of the listeners, their relationships with the music and the institutions that provided it, and the many manifestations of the Second World War as it shaped their experiences. To this end, the research complements analysis of the diaries and letters with a contextual study of the affairs of musical organisations, the political life of the music itself, and contemporary definitions of listening. This forms an important social, cultural, political and ideological background against which the thesis questions how particular listeners and their communities fitted into the broader national landscape of music-making.

The primary questions asked in this thesis are: what was the experience of listening to music really like during the Second World War? How was it shaped and influenced by the war?⁹ What were the main concerns of the listeners themselves? Other questions naturally follow from these: what cultural, personal and political significance did the experience of music have for listeners? What do personal accounts of listening experiences reveal about the musical and listening practices of the period?

In order to answer these questions, there are three main focuses for this project. The first focus is to establish the nuanced and varied effects of the Second World War within the documented experiences, by considering how it affected the lives of the listeners and the broader industries of

⁸ The term 'authentic' has been used here to convey the veracity of the sources studied as representations of genuine experiences, written with temporal immediacy to the event, and not mediated by memory or created as fiction. The term is also discussed with relation to the veracity of source material for listening experiences in Trevor Herbert, 'Protocols for Inclusion', LED PT 2013-05-21 Paper 2, 1.

⁹ The term 'influence' has been used throughout the thesis to convey a sense of the nuance and potential of the effects of wartime events, and to provide a contrast to the more explicit effect conveyed by the term 'impact'.

music-making in Britain. This involves direct manifestations, such as the impact of the conscription of musicians, paper shortages for programmes, black-outs and the destruction caused by bombs, and the availability of venues and air-raid shelters. However, it is also dependent on the other two focuses of the thesis.

The second focus aims to reach an understanding of the nature and shape of an experience of listening to music in this period, and how it was influenced by, and reflected, specific environmental, cultural, historical, musical and personal circumstances. As Frith suggests, the study of listening 'cannot be disentangled from the question of who is listening (their knowledge, experience, purpose, personality, and so on), in which places and circumstances'.¹⁰ This places an emphasis on the contextual data contained within the written experiences surrounding the listener's response (termed 'peripheral data' by some scholars, to enable a distinction from biographical details and the testimony of experience).¹¹ As demonstrated in Chapter 3, this information offers an invaluable resource for insights into the details of musical life more broadly, as well as 'the listening habits and behaviours of an individual, or broader patterns across a range of listeners, locations, time periods and different types of music'.¹²

The third focus is to establish the broader relationship of wartime experiences of listening to the concepts that (consciously or unconsciously) underlay them for the listener and shape how the experience was discussed in writing. These concepts form the main themes that thread through the thesis. They include listeners' identities within broader listening communities, musical taste, musical knowledge and the judgement of musical value, the historical and political situation (including nationalism and political programming of foreign music), the role of technology, the bodies of cultural and social behaviours and norms to which listeners subscribed, and the importance of language in writing about music. This focus also reflects upon the relationship of an experience with the ideological ideas and controversies that were a battleground for those who provided the music.

Through the deployment of the primary sources described above, this thesis shows that the experience of listening to music did not conform to the coherent or ideological picture presented by popular memorialisation and some historical studies of World War Two, but a multifaceted,

¹⁰ Simon Frith, 'More Than Meets the Ear: On Listening as a Social Practice', in *Listening to Music: People, Practices and Experiences*, ed. Helen Barlow and David Rowland (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 2017), <http://ledbooks.org/proceedings2017>.

¹¹ David Rowland, 'Introduction', in *Listening of Music: People, Practices and Experiences*, ed. Helen Barlow and David Rowland (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 2017), <http://ledbooks.org/proceedings2017>; Simon Brown, 'Analysing Listening Experiences: A Case Study of the Young Benjamin Britten', in *Listening to Music: People, Practices and Experiences*, ed. Helen Barlow and David Rowland (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 2017), <http://ledbooks.org/proceedings2017>. Brown argues that 'labeling these details as 'peripheral' is not to suggest that they are inferior to the descriptive testimony of the experience, but merely that their significance is not always immediately apparent'.

¹² Brown, 'Analysing Listening Experiences'.

fragmented and disparate one. It questions whether there existed a consistent attitude towards the war and the provision of music amongst the listeners whose writings are examined. The survival of musical life during World War Two was not a given, particularly within the initial period, and this uncertainty is witnessed in the writings of listeners throughout the war, just as it is in the critics' reviews above. Understanding how the uncertainty was mediated through their experiences and writings is an important part of establishing how the Second World War affected listeners. In the following chapters, there is a particular interest in notions of normality in the ways listeners responded to experiences, and the way that the continued survival (and in some cases, flourishing) of musical life became part of a necessary and regular display of normal life. This fragile 'normality' existed simultaneously for the British public with the horror and violence of a war that physically arrived at the Home Front with the Blitz in August 1940 (after almost a year of restless uncertainty) and remained until victory in 1945. Therefore, both 'everyday' and exceptional musical experiences are considered particularly with reference to their interaction with the war. That the Second World War had a large impact upon the music industry over its six-year period is well-evidenced. However, how this in turn affected listeners, as real people living through the war, has not been assessed until this project.

This thesis focuses on several of the more dominant disparate parts of musical life in wartime Britain, insofar as they are represented by the choices and experiences of a small, and largely unrepresentative group of individuals. The areas studied include the thriving classical music scene in London, the integral role of the wireless and dances, the continued survival of community variety concerts throughout the country, the occurrence of spontaneous musical activity in the streets, and the use of music in popular Hollywood cinema. Consideration of other fields is beyond the scope of this thesis, particularly due to the scarcity of primary sources of experiences of listening to them. These fields include music found in the military or wartime factories (although conscripted musicians are mentioned throughout the thesis), the government's entertainment initiatives, folk and religious music, or the music-hall and brass-band traditions. These fields present rich opportunities for further study. The use of music for propaganda purposes is examined with relation to its incorporation of both classical and popular genres, and the instances in which these listeners encountered it.

1. Review of the literature

This is a historical and cultural study of both the context for and personal nature of listening. As such, it is an interdisciplinary study of the kind that has become popular in recent decades. It sits on the apex between the two main bodies of scholarship on which it draws for approach and framework: the study of listening, and the historical and cultural study of music in the Second World War. They are supported throughout the thesis by a number of other disciplines that offer

helpful critical models, including popular music and film studies, linguistics, identity studies, and broader social, economic and cultural histories of the period. There have been no previous comprehensive attempts to study the experience of listening to music during the Second World War, or to use a similar body of primary sources as a foundation for the study of listening. The experience of listening to music during the Second World War was chosen as the topic of this thesis to reflect these two important gaps in this duality of current literature. This study will therefore offer a new historical approach in the field of listening studies, and new perspectives on the musical life of wartime Britain. The following review considers the approaches, benefits and limitations of both bodies of scholarship with respect to this study.

The scholarly study of listening to music has largely emerged since the 1990s. Over the preceding century, various figures in musicology (such as Helmholtz, Riemann, Bessler and Adorno) wrote about listening in the context of the aesthetic experience of structural characteristics of a musical artwork, but failed to incite a wider interest in the subject.¹³ In contrast, the scholars from the 1990s primarily studied listening as a historical and cultural phenomenon, and attempted to offer a historiographical perspective on not just the music experienced, but the act of listening as well.¹⁴ Since the 1990s, there has been a growing interest in listening across other, diverse fields, such as: theory and the typology of listening, history, social studies, psychology, sound studies, music and consciousness, music and emotion, cultural taste, perception and ecology, cognition and biology, ethnography, and ethnomusicology.¹⁵ As this list demonstrates, interest within scientific fields has caused an explosion of research far greater than that of historical musicology.

Whilst it is commonly acknowledged that listening as an activity comprises a variety of styles and meanings dependent on its context, situation and purpose for the listener, the study of the phenomenon of listening remains a disparate field of approaches and conclusions. As Herbert argues, 'different ways of conceptualising listening have the potential to construct or diminish as well as reflect diverse modes of experiencing music' as each 'theoretical frame' inevitably privileges particular perspectives or characteristics of musical meaning.¹⁶ In 2010, Bacht spoke of 'almost irreconcilable differences in conviction and methodology' between the two main 'camps' within the field: social and cultural historians, and music psychologists and cognitive scientists.¹⁷ One camp has focussed upon specific historical issues and prioritised the validity of historical

¹³ For a historical overview of research into musical listening, see Nikolaus Bacht, 'Introduction', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 135, Special Issue 1 (2010); Rowland, "Introduction."

¹⁴ James H Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); *Early Music* 25, no. 4, 25th Anniversary Issue, 'Listening Practice'; *Musical Quarterly* 82, no. 3/4, Special Issue: 'Music as Heard'.

¹⁵ Rowland and Herbert provide succinct overviews of the scholars and publications leading in these fields. Rowland, 'Introduction'.; Ruth Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening and Modes of Subjectivity in Everyday Life', *Journal of Sonic Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012), <http://journal.sonicstudies.org/vol02/nr01/a05>.

¹⁶ Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening'.

¹⁷ Bacht, 'Introduction', 1–2.

knowledge and change, whereas the other has taken an empirical approach to ascertaining the scientific invariability of listening as a biological and cognitive process of perception.

Recently, several scholars including Bacht have pointed to the necessity for interdisciplinary co-operation and study which considers the sensual and cognitive phenomena of listening, the importance of the musical artwork in the temporal and structural experience of music, and cultural modes of listening behaviour and practice across history. The *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 2010 special issue titled 'Listening: interdisciplinary perspectives' (and preceding conference in 2006) was the first attempt to bring disciplines together. Along similar lines, several papers in the Listening Experience Database (LED) project publication *Listening to music: people, practices and experiences* (and preceding conference in 2015), point to the possibility of interdisciplinary cooperation between sociological, ethnomusicological, musicological and cultural-historical perspectives. Rowland suggests that 'common ground in the conclusions of chapters written from very different perspectives is striking and argues for future collaboration across fields of enquiry', and Dearn *et al.* echo this, pointing to the scope for 'questions at the forefront of [ethnographic] research to be applied to the historical evidence' to 'demonstrate that the effects of venue, the presence of other listeners and the expectations drawn from prior arts engagement have shaped audience experience over many centuries.'¹⁸ Following in this interdisciplinary vein, this thesis draws from both historical and social-psychological studies of listening for its critical framework and approach towards analysing listening.

A large body of historical explorations (in the special issues of *Early Music* and *Musical Quarterly*) is primarily concerned with listening in the medieval and early modern eras, and has pointed to useful avenues of enquiry for this thesis.¹⁹ They offer accounts which explore the importance of 'the listeners' point of hearing' (the physical, religious and social contexts of listening) to the practices of specific periods and places, and aimed to promote the understanding of this music according to 'the mentalities, sensibilities, and belief systems that conditioned its perception'.²⁰ These studies demonstrate an interest in questions that situate and foreground the listener (asking, for example, what responses listening involved: interaction, interaction, participation, gesture, privacy, silence, concentration).

¹⁸ Rowland, 'Introduction'; Lucy Dearn *et al.*, 'The Listening Experience of the Classical Concert Hall: The Value of Qualitative Research with Current Audiences', in *Listening to Music: People, Practices and Experiences*, ed. Helen Barlow and David Rowland (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 2017), <http://ledbooks.org/proceedings2017>.

¹⁹ *Early Music* 25, no. 4, 25th Anniversary Issue, 'Listening Practice' (1997); *Musical Quarterly* 82, no. 3/4, Special Issue: 'Music as Heard' (1998).

²⁰ Robert C. Wegman, 'Music as Heard: Listeners and Listening in Late-Medieval and Early Modern Europe (1300–1600): A Symposium at Princeton University, 27–28 September 1997', *Musical Quarterly* 82, no. 3/4, Special Issue: 'Music as Heard' (1998), 432.

Studies of the historical practice of listening since the eighteenth century are few (although gradually increasing).²¹ They have been primarily centred on the emergence of prevailing attitudes towards 'appropriate' (silent) listening behaviour and etiquette in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.²² Johnson and Weber give particular attention to the political and cultural environments (the 'historical conditions affecting the sound world in which hearing takes place and music is made'):²³ the growth of bourgeois society and values, structural developments in musical styles, and the emergence of a 'canon' of classical repertoire which 'began to shape Western public taste and values in music'.²⁴ Historical research has also demonstrated that aside from academic texts, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there existed a body of educational literature (discussed in Chapter 1) designed to inform listeners about the etiquette of listening in public,²⁵ about the music they were listening to,²⁶ and how to properly appreciate it.²⁷

The conclusions drawn in this field form an interesting historical context for the attitudes prevalent by the 1930s, and particular relevance to the study of listening to classical music in London in Chapter 3. However, there are three significant limitations to this field. First, there has been little attempt in the literature to carry this interest forward chronologically to study twentieth-century changes in listening practices brought about by the advent of technologies for listening, and other broader social and political influences.²⁸ Second, there remains a focus, in both the tools of the time and current literature, on the study of listening as a means of understanding the musical work. It is likely that this continued focus represents an extension of

²¹ As is demonstrated by Darryl Cressman, 'Listening, Attentive Listening, and Musical Meaning', in *Building Musical Culture in Nineteenth-Century Amsterdam: The Concertgebouw* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016); Nancy November, 'The String Quartet and the Listener', in *Cultivating String Quartets in Beethoven's Vienna* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2017). Claire D. Nicholls, Clare Hall, and Rachel Forgasz, 'Charting the Past to Understand the Cultural Inheritance of Concert Hall Listening and Audience Development Practices', *Paedagogica Historica* (2017). See also several chapters in Helen Barlow and David Rowland, eds., *Listening to Music: People, Practices and Experiences* (Milton Keynes: The Open University), <http://ledbooks.org/proceedings2017>.

²² Johnson, *Listening in Paris*; William Weber, 'Did People Listen in the 18th Century?', *Early Music* 25, no. 4, 25th Anniversary Issue, 'Listening Practice' (1997); Christina Bashford, 'Learning to Listen: Audiences for Chamber Music in Early-Victorian London', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 4, no. 1 (1999).

²³ Leon Botstein, 'Toward a History of Listening', *Musical Quarterly* 82, no. 3/4, Special Issue: 'Music as Heard' (1998), 430.

²⁴ David R. M. Irving, '"For Whom the Bell Tolls": Listening and Its Implications', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 135, Special Issue 1 (2010), 19–20.

²⁵ See Leon Botstein, 'Listening through Reading: Musical Literacy and the Concert Audience', *19th-Century Music* 16, no. 2, Music in Its Social Contexts (1992).

²⁶ See Catherine Dale, *Music Analysis in Britain in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

²⁷ Bashford, 'Learning to Listen'; 'Not Just "G": Towards the History of the Programme Note', in *George Grove, Music and Victorian Culture*, ed. Michael Musgrave (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK). Nicholls, Hall, and Forgasz, 'Charting the Past'.

²⁸ Although several papers on the recording industry offer tantalising glimpses into historical notions of listening, such as Eric F. Clarke, 'The Impact of Recording on Listening', *twentieth-century music* 4, no. 1 (2007). Other historical studies similarly touch on the subject (discussed below). Research on the history of live music in the twentieth century is largely confined to popular music industries or centres on later developments of rock culture, such as the work of Simon Frith.

the wider discourses of traditional musicology, which has long placed the 'work' firmly at the centre of research,²⁹ even within more contextually dependent fields such as reception studies. Third, within the wider body of literature on listening, there is a significant gap surrounding the use of historical evidence of actual experience of listening.³⁰ As such, there is little support for either the methodological processes of gathering and analysing such material on a large scale, or its application to wider discourses across musicology.

In contrast, the field of social 'applied' psychology of music offers a well-established and in-depth understanding of the full scope of listening experiences, predominantly based on actual testimony from listeners (offering the potential for comparison between current and wartime listeners). The fields of psychology, ecology, perception and cognitive science offer many studies surrounding listening to music in terms of the effects it has upon the brain and behaviour.³¹ However, as has been acknowledged by several scholars, 'one of the major drawbacks of experimental approaches is their disregard for the (often highly consequential) social environments in which musical listening takes place'.³² The development of social, 'applied' psychology (since the 1980s) led the study of listening away from laboratory experiments and towards the study of the 'totality of experience and listening behaviours in situ in real-world contexts'.³³ Empirical research (often in collaboration with arts organisations) on modern audiences has built a substantial body of literature about the experiences of real listeners (both individuals and communities), based on techniques such as participant observation, interviews and questionnaires. These studies explore a diverse range of settings and musical genres, such as jazz, orchestral concerts, and chamber music,³⁴ with a particular interest in technology, and the development of qualitative

²⁹ See Irving, "'For Whom the Bell Tolls'", 19–20.

³⁰ Weber makes use of travel diaries and letters as a source for examples in support of his argument for changing listening behaviours. Weber, 'Did People Listen in the 18th Century?'. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, much of the debate has centred around idealised or generalised images of the listener and listening process, drawing parallels with Anderson's 'figures of the audience': Lauren Anderson, 'Beyond Figures of the Audience: Towards a Cultural Understanding of the Film Music Audience', *Music, Sound and the Moving Image* 10, no. 1 (2016). Recent work by LED, dedicated to sourcing this very body of material, is only beginning to make strides into the use and analysis of this evidence in historical research but offers a few models. For example, Ingrid E. Pearson, 'Listening and Performing: Experiences of Twentieth-Century British Wind Players', in *Listening to Music: People, Practices and Experiences*, ed. Helen Barlow and David Rowland (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 2017), <http://ledbooks.org/proceedings2017>; Simon Brown, 'Analysing Listening Experiences', *ibid*.

³¹ For example, Eric F. Clarke, *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

³² Dearn *et al.*, 'The Listening Experience of the Classical Concert Hall'. See also Eric Clarke, Nicola Dibben, and Stephanie Pitts, *Music and Mind in Everyday Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

³³ Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening'.

³⁴ Karen Burland and Stephanie Pitts, eds., *Coughing and Clapping: Investigating Audience Experience* (Farnham: Routledge, 2014); Karen Burland and Stephanie E. Pitts, 'Understanding Jazz Audiences: Listening and Learning at the Edinburgh Jazz Festival', *Journal of New Music Research* 39, no. 2 (2010); Karen Burland and Stephanie Pitts, 'Rules and Expectations of Jazz Gigs', *Social Semiotics* 22, no. 5; Stephanie E. Pitts, 'What Makes an Audience? Investigating the Roles and Experiences of Listeners at a Chamber Music Festival', *Music & Letters* 86, no. 2; Stephanie E. Pitts and Christopher P. Spencer, 'Loyalty and Longevity in

methodologies that enable researchers to gather cumulative evidence on the nature of listening experiences.³⁵

Empirical studies explore the experience of listening 'in its many facets – from the decision to attend a particular event, the ways of listening and engaging in the moment, and the process of articulating and reflecting on that event and its relationship to other aspects of the listener's life'.³⁶ Therefore, despite the considerable methodological differences, this field of studies offers useful alternative perspectives and critical models from which to consider the historical evidence of an individual's listening experiences (particularly with regard to the temporal nature of preparation, experience and documentation; the importance of space and venue; and the role of expectations), and all the contextual data that the experiences convey.³⁷ It also offers an interesting comparison to the approach taken towards the value of this information in historical studies. Similarly, psychological research on strong experiences of music (SEM) provides useful models of the nature of listening experiences (discussed in Chapter 3).³⁸ Although direct comparison is unwise given the different chronological and methodological bases of the evidence, these approaches do offer this study a comparative framework in developing its own understanding of the historically situated and mediated experience.

As Dearn *et al.* recognised, the questions asked by these empirical studies bear remarkable similarity to those this thesis is asking of historical listeners, and thus share a common concern with the ways in which listeners think, talk and write about their experiences of live music and their preoccupations and concerns. This suggestion is borne out in the following chapters. Situating this thesis between historical and current empirical studies of listening practices demonstrates that the findings of a historical study into listening experience have a wider applicability than research has previously acknowledged, and bear comparison not only to other historical listeners (for example, as in the work of Weber and Bashford) but to modern listeners as well.

Audience Listening: Investigating Experiences of Attendance at a Chamber Music Festival', *ibid.*, 89, no.2; Stephanie E. Pitts *et al.*, 'Views of an Audience: Understanding the Orchestra Concert Experience from Player and Listener Perspectives', *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies* 10, no. 2.

³⁵ See chapters in Burland and Pitts, *Coughing and Clapping*; J. Radborne, H. Glow, and R. Johanson, eds., *The Audience Experience: A Critical Analysis of Audiences in the Performing Arts* (Bristol: Intellect, 2013).

³⁶ Dearn *et al.*, 'The Listening Experience of the Classical Concert Hall'.

³⁷ That is, the 'peripheral data', contextual evidence that is apparent either explicitly or implicitly within the testimony, by which the listener provides information on the music, composers, performers, instrumentation, the environment of both listening and performance (whether public, private, solitary, or in the company of others), the locations (venues and geography), and how the music was transmitted (live, broadcast or recorded). See Brown, 'Analysing Listening Experiences'.

³⁸ Sidsel Karlsen, 'Context, Cohesion and Community: Characteristics of Festival Audience Members' Strong Experiences with Music', in *Coughing and Clapping: Investigating Audience Experience*, ed. Karen Burland and Stephanie Pitts (Farnham: Routledge, 2014); Alf Gabrielsson, 'Emotions in Strong Experiences with Music', in *Music and Emotion, Theory and Research*, ed. P. Juslin and J. Sloboda (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Placed alongside this there is the second body of literature: the historical and cultural study of musical activity in the Second World War. Scholarly writing about the period surrounding the Second World War has abounded in the seventy years since the Allied victory, which has resulted in a rich historiography of social, economic and cultural histories of life on the Home Front in all its political, ideological and mythical glories (and failures). This was a period of great upheaval within the musical landscape of Britain, which deeply affected the provision of music to the general listening public. However, much of the literature which considers musical activity is found within broader studies, either chronologically or thematically. As such, the 'usually fleeting attempts to deal with music are [...] hampered by overgeneralisations',³⁹ with limited space given to either the relevant period or to the issues of musical provision and consumption. An example of this is Calder's brief treatment of music in his monograph *The People's War*, which primarily engages with the broad political alignments and functions of the major national and state institutions and the ideological images that have come to represent the transcendence of serious music in wartime in popular memory of the Second World War.⁴⁰

Until recently, musicologists have been slow to join the historical discourses around which much of the debate centres, with biographies of prominent composers and critics, and analysis of 'war-influenced' compositions providing the chief acknowledgement of the Second World War's potential and diverse effects.⁴¹ Whilst most such material is to be found in the autobiographies of the composers, MacKay's chapter 'Safe and Sound' in *Millions Like Us?* offers an example of this traditional perspective in which the war is presented solely as an (emotional) influence to be manifested in an individual's creative output.⁴²

Therefore, much of the arts- and music-centred discourse has stemmed from the work of social and cultural historians, and is found within wider studies in which musical provision is only one facet of many. This wider literature continues to be concerned with dominant narratives and institutions, such as national identity, morale, ideological myths of World War Two (or a combination of),⁴³ and the BBC (which has received a large amount of the scholarship).⁴⁴ Whilst

³⁹ Kate Guthrie, 'Review Article: Soundtracks to the People's War', *Music & Letters* 94, no. 2 (2013), 326.

⁴⁰ Calder, *The People's War*, 372–4.

⁴¹ This remains true in more recent literature as well, for example, Robert MacKay, 'Safe and Sound: New Music in Wartime Britain', in *'Millions Like Us?': British Culture in the Second World War*, ed. N. Hayes and J. Hill (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999); Kate Guthrie, 'Propaganda Music in the Second World War: John Ireland's *Epic March*', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 139, no. 1 (2014).

⁴² MacKay, 'Safe and Sound', 206–7.

⁴³ For example, R. Weight, 'State, Intelligentsia and the Promotion of National Culture in Britain, 1939–45', *Historical Research* 69 (1996); Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Britain, 1939–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Robert MacKay, *Half the Battle: Civilian Morale in Britain During the Second World War* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2002); Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Random House, 1991); Zeigler, *London at War*.

⁴⁴ Asa Briggs, *The War of Words*, vol. III, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978); Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting: Volume*

cultural histories provide a wealth of contextual data and ideological narratives with which to frame and understand reception and individual experiences, their 'interest in music has tended to be conditioned by historical rather than musicological concerns: the extent to which music might affirm or contest war's myths'.⁴⁵ Other historians, have focussed their efforts upon musical history, and offer valuable insights into the detailed workings of specific segments of the music industry and its provision of music. Ehrlich's work on the music profession, for example, offers a very different narrative perspective to more institutionally grounded studies.⁴⁶ Studies of specific genres of music likewise inform the contextual data of the thesis; however they too spend less attention on the period of war. Moreover, much relevant scholarship ends with the interwar period.⁴⁷

However, the dominant trend in the literature on musical provision echoes that of more broadly sweeping histories. Specific studies of wartime musical activity have continued to focus upon either the dominant institutional or the state agencies that performed integral roles in that provision, and there is little engagement with actual pieces of music or performances.⁴⁸ These agencies primarily include the BBC, the government-funded wartime music initiatives the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA), the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA), and the Ministry of Information. However, other (classical music) organisations that have attracted specific historiographies include the Royal Philharmonic Society (RPS), the BBC Symphony Orchestra (BBCSO), and the Proms.⁴⁹ Histories of film and dance industries offer similarly focussed studies.⁵⁰ Recently, there has been a growing interest within music histories in the role of music to provide a tool for propaganda and the development of cultural values during World War Two, combined with a move towards more musicological studies that pay attention to the musical repertoire. This has led to an emerging body of scholarship focussed upon the use and occurrence of particular styles of music throughout the war, by

One 1929–1939: Serving the Nation (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991); Siân Nicholas, *The Echo of War: Home Front Propaganda and the Wartime BBC, 1939–45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).

⁴⁵ Guthrie, 'Review Article: Soundtracks to the People's War', 327.

⁴⁶ For example, Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

⁴⁷ For example, Jennifer Doctor, *The BBC and Ultra-Modern Music, 1922–1936: Shaping a Nation's Tastes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); James Nott, *Music for the People: Popular Music and Dance in Interwar Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁴⁸ Such as Calder, *The People's War*; Ehrlich, *The Music Profession*; Nick Hayes, 'More Than "Music-While-You-Eat"? Factory and Hostel Concerts, "Good Culture" and the Workers', in *'Millions Like Us'?: British Culture in the Second World War*, ed. N. Hayes and J. Hill (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999); Christina Baade, *Victory through Harmony: The BBC and Popular Music in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁴⁹ Cyril Ehrlich, *First Philharmonic: A History of the Royal Philharmonic Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Nicholas Kenyon, *The BBC Symphony Orchestra: The First Fifty Years 1930–1980* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1981); Jennifer Doctor and David Wright, eds., *The Proms: A New History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2007).

⁵⁰ For example, James Nott, *Going to the Palais: A Social and Cultural History of Dancing and Dance Halls in Britain, 1918–60* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

particular institutions (again, most frequently the BBC).⁵¹ They generally remain centred on the musical object, or its critical or collective reception as their point of analysis (reflecting traditional musicological interest in the musical 'work'). The quantity and clustering of research, with particular regard to the BBC, suggests its importance as a national musical institution and thus as a fruitful framework for the study of wartime musical discourses and ideologies, such as cultural value and identity, political role and programming, morale, entertainment and education. These themes therefore point to interesting areas of reflection for this thesis.

Overall, historical studies present a complex picture, and demonstrate a highly fragmented interest and understanding in the musical landscape of the Second World War. Jeff Hill's understanding of wartime experiences' 'kaleidoscopic' existence of 'constantly varying patterns, difficult to pin down' offers a pleasing analogy for the aim of this thesis to explore the true variation and diversity of musical activity and experiences across wartime Britain.⁵²

There are three main limitations of the field of historical literature. First, the continued segmentation and lack of a unified direction provides an incomplete picture of the landscape of musical activity during the Second World War. This includes a persisting division between musical styles (classical, popular, light, film and so on) in the way scholars approach the period. Second, traditional discourses concerning wartime musical provision have often been characterised by narratives of progress, change and impact, with a focus upon the agencies of production and dissemination. This has under-valued the third facet of musical activity, the making and experience of music (something this thesis will go some way to reversing) and also overwhelmingly neglected the realm of traditional, amateur and popular music-making that represented the majority of musical activity in non-urban life before the war. Third, those who experience the music, whether thought of as a collective body or as individuals, have held little place within these narratives.

There is, however, a small body of literature that stands as an exception to these problems. Since Kerman's call for musicological inclusivity in the 1980s,⁵³ scholars of music have broadened their approaches, and recognition of the popular and 'middlebrow' as worthy of intellectual study has increased. Research by McKibbin and Guthrie, for example, demonstrates a move towards

⁵¹ Demonstrated by a number of recent doctoral theses on the subject: Constance Dee, 'Music and Propaganda: Soviet Music and the BBC During the Second World War' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 2007); Claire Launchbury, 'Music in Transmission Constructing French Cultural Memory at the BBC During the Second World War' (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 2009); Morris, 'Battle for Music'; Kate Guthrie, 'Music and Cultural Values in 1940s Britain' (Ph.D. thesis, King's College London, 2014). See also Robert MacKay, 'Leaving out the Black Notes: The BBC and "Enemy Music" in the Second World War', *Media History* 6, no. 1 (2000); 'Being Beastly to the Germans: Music, Censorship and the BBC in World War II', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio & Television* 20, no. 4 (2000); Baade, *Victory through Harmony*.

⁵² Jeff Hill, 'Postscript: A War Imagined', in *'Millions Like Us'?: British Culture in the Second World War*, ed. N. Hayes and J. Hill (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 328.

⁵³ See Joseph Kerman, *Musicology* (London: Fontana, 1985).

bridging the classical-popular dichotomy with the study of middlebrow music of the wartime period (such as 'light' music, popular classics, film music, and state-commissioned, war-related compositions);⁵⁴ Guthrie's thesis demonstrates an uncommon inclusion of both classical and popular culture, and is a helpful critical model for this thesis. Their work demonstrates how the routine upholding of the dichotomy by both musicology (with its traditional high-culture focus) and popular music studies (such as Baade's) crumbles within the 'liminal space' of the middlebrow and the co-opted wartime functionality of all institutionalised music during the Second World War. These repertoires have particular importance in the consideration of public and individual taste, actual listening experience, and the relevance of the ideologies surrounding wartime music (see Chapter 1).

Popular music has long been a performance based culture, and its musicology suffers less from the association of the music with a fixed text (represented by the musical score), instead often understood and defined as something fluid and temporal.⁵⁵ Broader studies of twentieth-century popular music are characterised by the brevity of attention to this period,⁵⁶ although there are notable exceptions.⁵⁷ Baade's study of the BBC's attitudes towards popular music during World War Two offers an important model for this thesis in its foregrounding of the musical event.⁵⁸ Like Hill, Baade acknowledges the kaleidoscopic nature of writing a history of the wartime period, referencing not diversity of experiences, but diversity of musical provision and listener taste. This is a concept that finds particular resonance in this thesis. Baade's research provides an information-rich source for this thesis; her approach is music-oriented, performance-centric and highly contextualised, focused on the influential hierarchies of technological, ideological and political agencies.

Guthrie recently argued that 'even historians are starting to feel that scholarship of the [Second World War] period is reaching saturation point'.⁵⁹ However, a survey of the current literature on wartime musical activity demonstrates that there are significant areas that still require, and deserve, attention. Traditional British music-making receives even less attention than popular activities, in either broader popular music histories or the institution-dominated narratives of World War Two. For example, McKibbin briefly skirts around the genres, whilst emphasising the

⁵⁴ Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England, 1918–1951* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Guthrie, 'Review Article: Soundtracks to the People's War'.

⁵⁵ Although there are some exceptions, such as Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1990).

⁵⁶ For example, *ibid.*

⁵⁷ Such as McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*; James Nott, *Music for the People: Popular Music and Dance in Interwar Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); John Bush Jones, *The Songs That Fought the War: Popular Music and the Home Front, 1939–1945* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2006); Baade, *Victory through Harmony*.

⁵⁸ *Victory through Harmony*.

⁵⁹ Guthrie, 'Review Article: Soundtracks to the People's War', 325–6.

influence of American 'popular' dance and jazz music over the first half of the twentieth-century.⁶⁰ Few scholars discuss or emphasise the role of the music hall, brass band or choral society in pre-war or wartime Britain, or their changing roles within the musical landscape.⁶¹ Amateur, folk and religious music, has likewise received little attention; nor has military music and the importance of military musicians to the national landscape of live and broadcast music. Similarly, the mentions of provincial and regional music-making are often dominated by references to CEMA and ENSA, rather than assessing the effect of the war upon the regional organisations (such as city orchestras), festivals and societies, some of which survived throughout the Second World War. This means that it is problematic to assess properly the full musical landscape of wartime Britain and provide context for experiences of these genres, for the information is hidden in a wealth of biographies, memoirs, minor histories, and articles about specific people, venues and organisations. This limitation is reflected in this thesis to some extent, although it has been guided by the scarcity of listeners who wrote about their experiences of these genres and events, and thus the difficulty of addressing these topics in depth. As recognised by Rowland, similar limitations also constrain the ability of listening studies to assess the public of genres of music where literacy, or the inclination to record their lives, was problematic.⁶²

Guthrie and Baade have both suggested that deeper inquiry into wartime music may change its recent status as continually 'reduced to yet another indicator of social change', and 'a compliant soundtrack underscoring People's War themes of unity and shared sacrifice'.⁶³ They suggest it may also provide a way forward for cultural histories of the period, by offering a new perspective on the ideological landscape of music and culture in wartime Britain. Although recent research has begun to take steps towards this goal (by Baade and Guthrie themselves, and others including Morris, Dee, and MacKay), there is considerably more work to be done. Re-focusing research on wartime musical activity amid the ephemeral moment of actual performance and experience, without a desire to evidence ideological theories, may help to adjust the current situation away from generalisations, popular imagery and agency-based narratives, and towards the authentic and everyday experience of music. This thesis makes a significant contribution towards a move in this direction.

Little or no attention has been given in the literature to wartime listeners, especially as individuals, with the exception of research on the BBC (which itself had an interest in its audience

⁶⁰ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 390–418.

⁶¹ Some scholars do discuss this matter, such as Dave Russell, "'What's Wrong with Brass Bands?': Cultural Change and the Band Movement, 1918–C.1964", in *The British Brass Band: A Musical and Social History*, ed. Trevor Herbert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁶² Rowland, 'Introduction'.

⁶³ Guthrie, 'Review Article: Soundtracks to the People's War', 326; Baade, *Victory through Harmony*.

of listeners that began in the 1930s).⁶⁴ That research is therefore concerned with groups and communities within the national audience, and particular issues of national taste and popularity, as opposed to individual. Other historians, such as Calder, have relied upon the experiences of individual listeners to provide 'anecdotal evidence' for their narrative, particularly with reference to the strong ideological images of music's power and transcendence a well-chosen experience can reinforce (such as the quotations opening this Introduction, discussed further in Chapter 5).⁶⁵

A singular and distinctive study which foregrounds listening is the exploration of female factory workers and their musical experiences whilst at work, by Korczynski *et al.*⁶⁶ It offers both a rare example of the use of listening experiences as the foundation of a study into wartime musical activity and a unique insight into a facet of the landscape that is widely overlooked in the literature. However, the paper uses a very different body of sources to this thesis, as it is based on memories of female workers, recorded at some temporal distance during interviews⁶⁷ (as opposed to directly written records), in comparison with official reports written for Mass Observation (MO). Bade's *Music Wars* likewise includes a considerable quantity of individual experience, particularly memories.⁶⁸ However, his tendency to extrapolate 'grand narratives' from individual experiences, suggests a different critical approach is required to examine listening experiences.⁶⁹

The neglect of the listeners in historical literature on the musical activity of World War Two also reflects the dominance of national narratives (particularly with reference to culture and identity),⁷⁰ with interest in the individual narrative a relatively recent emergence in the broader (academic and popular) body of wartime literature.⁷¹ Put together, this demonstrates that there is a significant gap concerning the use of actual experiences of listening within the wider literature on musical activity, which this thesis begins to fill and that requires considerable future work.

⁶⁴ *Victory through Harmony*; Dee, 'Music and Propaganda'. The BBC established a Listener Research Department in 1936, discussed in Chapter 2. See Robert Silvey, *Who's Listening?* (Birkenhead: George Allen & Unwin, 1974).

⁶⁵ Calder, *The People's War*, 373–4.

⁶⁶ Marek Korczynski *et al.*, "'We Sang Ourselves through That War': Women, Music and Factory Work in World War Two", *Labour History Review* 70, no. 2 (2005).

⁶⁷ The interviews were from the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive, recorded in 1988–89.

⁶⁸ Patrick Bade, *Music Wars: 1937–1945* (London: East & West Publishing, 2012).

⁶⁹ Guthrie has also described Bade's use of the experiences as 'anecdotal'. Guthrie, 'Review Article: Soundtracks to the People's War', 328.

⁷⁰ For example, Rose, *Which People's War*; John Baxendale, "'You and I – All of Us Ordinary People': Renegotiating "Britishness" in Wartime', in *'Millions Like Us'?: British Culture in the Second World War*, ed. N. Hayes and J. Hill (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999).

⁷¹ Published extracts from MO diaries, for example, dominate the current popular literature on World War Two, presented as the 'real' voices and experiences of wartime. For example, Simon Garfield, *We Are at War: The Diaries of Five Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times* (London: Ebury Press, 2005); *Private Battles: How the War Almost Defeated Us* (Reading: Ebury Press, 2006). Some more scholarly approaches have also been taken such as James Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives: Mass Observation and the Making of the Modern Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Taken together, the bodies of scholarship on listening and on the musical landscape of the Second World War reveal a number of significant limitations in their scope and approach thus far. There has been little scholarly attention to the historical listening experiences or practices of individuals in either body (with recent exceptions as indicated above), which has left a methodological gap concerning the systematic analysis of the evidence used. Although more studies are moving beyond traditional sources such as newspapers and institutional files to consider cultural communities through polls, fan material and letters, they too search for broader narratives than the individual.⁷² As both fields are beginning to demonstrate, it is only by doing so that we can fully appreciate the diversity of what it means to listen to music, in any period. The lack of attention to authentic experience is perhaps a result of a reluctance to use diaries and letters as the foundation for musicological research, and a continued belief in the lack of available documents from which to construct a meaningful narrative.⁷³

The subject is evidently, as Baade and Hill allude to, a kaleidoscopic on two accounts: the variety of musical activity and experience during World War Two, and the diversity of the nature of listening more generally. The narrative in both fields has, with some recent exceptions, prioritised the national, institutional or wider audience perspective. In recent decades, historians have felt the need to defend the continued study of the Second World War's social and cultural landscape by pointing to 'the sheer diversity of wartime experience of different individuals, different localities, different organisations and different social groups', as the way forward.⁷⁴ This thesis too takes up this defence, for a recognition of this 'sheer diversity' of the social and musical circumstances of individual experience forms a key thread throughout its narrative. It changes the viewpoint from broad to individual, and from musical objects, institutions and policies to events. Whilst this offers a far less representative set of conclusions, this is far outweighed by the value of studying such material. It offers a perspective on not only individuals, but the wider, and varied, communities of musical activity they participated in.

Thus, by filling these gaps, there is threefold contribution of this thesis to musicology and historiography: a new approach to both the musical history of the Second World War and to our understanding of listening, combined through analysis of a new base of source material.

⁷² For example, Mark Glancy, 'Picturegoer: The Fan Magazine and Popular Film Culture in Britain During the Second World War', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio & Television* 31, no. 4 (2011); Lucy Noakes, *War and the British: Gender, Memory and National Identity* (London: IB Tauris Publishers, 1998).

⁷³ See Morris, 'Battle for Music', 11.

⁷⁴ Jose Harris, 'War and Social History: Britain and the Home Front During the Second World War', *Contemporary European History* 1, no. 1 (1992), 33.

2. Sources and methodology

This research has been underpinned by its relationship with the Listening Experience Database Project (LED).⁷⁵ It was in part inspired by the purpose and shape of the LED project, and the two share an attitude towards the source materials they have in common: personal written accounts of authentic experiences of listening to music. The construction of LED during the course of this research project offered an insight into the growing understanding about the nature of listening experiences that the project team were developing. This in turn shaped the initial methodological process taken here towards the primary source material and the categorisation of its information and thematic indicators.

This thesis draws its source material primarily from the unpublished diaries and letters from four British archives. These are the Lionel Bradley archive at the Royal College of Music; the Frank Lewis archive at the Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff; the BBC Written Archive at Caversham; and the Mass Observation digital archive.⁷⁶ The rediscovery of the Lionel Bradley archive, which has received little scholarly attention, provided an impetus for this project by suggesting that fruitful insights into the experience of listening during the Second World War could be discovered within the unpublished personal documents of people who listened. Published articles from several newspapers and journals of the period are also examined, including *The Times*, *The Listener*, *The Manchester Guardian*, *The Observer*, and *Melody Maker*. Newspaper reviews are included as an important contemporary source of listening experiences that provide a complementary resource to the private accounts. As professional reviews are written for public consumption with the intention to influence public opinion, they provide a different perspective on the wartime listening experience.

Much of this material was never meant for the public eye, and relatively little of it has previously been brought to bear upon our understanding of musical life during the Second World War. However, it offers an incredibly rich and revealing view of the reality of listening to music during the war, as shall be explored in the following chapters. These archive resources are of inestimable value and could fuel further research that is beyond the scope of this thesis, on topics such as the reception of new classical music between the 1930s and 1950s, the wartime survival of amateur music-making, and the exploration of historical practices of musical performance reviewing.

⁷⁵ The database can be found at <https://led.kmi.open.ac.uk>.

⁷⁶ The Bradley archive, containing his concert 'bulletins' is held at the Royal College of Music's Library (previously the Centre for Performance History), GB-Lcm LJHB. The bulletins form Box 2, LJHB 02. Letters from listeners are found in five files at the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham (BBC WAC) R41/113/1, R41/113/2, R41/114/1, R41/114/2 and R41/114/3. The Frank Lewis Collection is at the Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff: GB 0214 D51, Part 1 of the collection contains his diaries, D51/1 'Diaries: Personal Diaries of Frank R. Lewis'. The Mass Observation diaries are digitally preserved on the Mass Observation Online website (<http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk>) and at the Mass Observation Archive, University of Sussex.

Where possible, original materials and supporting documents from the Second World War have been consulted to create a thorough picture of the listening culture of the period, and to provide further evidence of the relationship between musical experiences and the wartime narrative. These include BBC memos and annual published *Handbooks*, and a further selection of newspaper and journal articles. Two published sources of wartime MO diaries, *Private Battles* and *We are at War* by Simon Garfield, have also been used to provide complementary sources of listening experience across several chapters.⁷⁷

Research has been limited to sources written during, and about experiences within, the chronological boundaries of 1936–1946. The inclusion of the three years prior to World War Two has enabled consideration of the influence of the developing European conflict and the establishment of a foundation of normality to which the upheaval of war can be compared where possible. Memoirs and sources written at a considerable temporal distance to the war (such as the fascinating BBC People’s War digital archive) have not been considered, particularly as their language and (nostalgic) reminiscence requires a different analytical approach. This thesis is also geographically limited within Britain, primarily England, due to the nature of the archival material.

There are a number of limitations to working with historical sources in the study of listening experiences, in both their nature and content and their analysis. Firstly, whereas empirical research with current audiences enables researchers to ask deeper questions directly to the listeners, ensuring a complete and comparable set of data, historical research requires the analysis of evidence that often gives a minimal or partial picture of the experience, and requires the researcher’s interpretation of its veracity. This may result from the listener’s general and musical literacy (or lack of), and the purpose and audience for which he or she wrote.⁷⁸ Secondly, individual sources contain a variety of lengths, styles, and ‘peripheral data’ chronicling the events, and personal thoughts and observations, thus making broader comparison difficult at best. In combination with the multi-faceted nature of listening, this means that the evidence is often complex and potentially contradictory, and does not lend itself to generalisations about musical experience. Thirdly, an enduring methodological challenge facing both historical and empirical study of listening is posed by the mediation of language, and the difficulty and limited vocabulary demonstrated in listeners’ own interpretation and evaluation of their experience.⁷⁹ Fourthly, the lack of established analytical frameworks is a problem that is only recently being addressed in historical studies (in particular, as part of the recent publication of the LED 2015 conference proceedings).⁸⁰ Finally, there is the consideration of whether the written evidence of an

⁷⁷ Garfield, *We Are at War; Private Battles*.

⁷⁸ Noakes describes a similar awareness required in the use of MO sources. Noakes, *War and the British*.

⁷⁹ As acknowledged by Dearn *et al.*, ‘The Listening Experience of the Classical Concert Hall’.

⁸⁰ Barlow and Rowland, *Listening to Music*.

experience was genuine or contrived for an audience. Very different approaches have been taken towards both systematic analysis and sampling of different bodies of evidence to support particular narratives.⁸¹

Another problem relates to the systematic collection of sources and data for the study of listening. Aside from the initial issue of identifying potential archival sources of listening experiences, little of the material examined was digitised, categorised by keywords, or transcribed from its original written sources.⁸² Therefore, identifying relevant data within larger archives such as the MO archive presented a hurdle. Using simple keywords such as 'music' and 'listening' rarely presented results containing listening experiences, especially as 'listening' is a term rarely used to describe sources, as Rowland has also discussed.⁸³ Instead it was necessary to develop sets of keywords around specific activities, genres, media and environment of listening, such as 'concert', 'singing', 'radio', 'dance', to retrieve manageable numbers of relevant sources.

Each archive was firstly examined for thematic commonalities, in particular any recurring topics of interest for the listeners and direct mentions of the Second World War. The 'peripheral data' within the sources was also gathered to examine their contribution to contextual knowledge of musical life in wartime Britain. The themes arising from this analysis create a common thread throughout the thesis, corresponding to the primary research questions and informing the second and third research focuses described above. This methodological approach allowed for the sources to be handled with a mixture of thematic and chronological analysis. Each chapter of this thesis has a strong correlation with individual archival sources and a specific area of musical experiences. Their differing approaches, guided by the style and content of the sources, thus present a number of analytical focuses that highlight contrasting themes.

A number of differences have guided this methodology. The Bradley archive is far larger in scope, containing 1309 (October 1936 to September 1946) records of an individual's listening. This presented an opportunity to analyse change and continuity across the period of World War Two, through patterns in Bradley's concert-going with respect to venues, concert series, repertoire, composers and performers.⁸⁴ This was aided by Bradley's own interest in similar data-gathering. Bradley also clipped and referenced concert reviews, which are discussed in a later chapter with respect to potential influences upon listening and evaluating experiences.

⁸¹ Such as Brown, 'Analysing Listening Experiences'; Fiona Richards, 'Sensibility and Listening in England before and after the Great War', *ibid.*

⁸² The Bradley archive was digitised during the course of this project, although it still requires full transcription.

⁸³ Rowland, 'Introduction'.

⁸⁴ This chapter uses a similar approach to Brown, 'Analysing Listening Experiences'.

In contrast, only eighty-eight letters written to the BBC during this period have survived. They cannot be considered to offer a representative sample of the public who listened or wrote to the BBC,⁸⁵ and were often concerned with the general framework of radio listening as opposed to specific experiences. However, their benefit lies in the valuable breadth of opinions that occurred between multiple letters addressing similar topics. As such, they are analysed in comparison with the wartime narrative of change and controversy at the BBC.

The Lewis and MO archives offer another different perspective: as regular diaries, listening experiences are less frequent but richer in contextual detail; the recurrence of war-related popular music presented the opportunity to examine a more direct relationship between war and musical experience. Moreover, the multi-sensory and participatory experiences of popular music required a different analytical approach that considered the place and value of music and listening. Several diaries have a shorter time period (outlined in Chapter 4). Research on the MO archive was limited to the 'raw material' in the diaries a volunteer panel wrote for the organisation, and within this sample to individuals who frequently documented listening experiences in order to maintain continuity across the analyses.

A similar process was used to narrow the scope of the newspaper and journal reviews that survive in their thousands to specific review columns and events within the timeline of the Second World War to promote comparison within the analysis. As such, the chapter is divided between a chronological and thematic approach. The ramifications and limitations of the archives are discussed further within the relevant chapters.

3. Overview of chapters

Chapter 1 sets the scene for the following analyses by exploring the context for listening during the 1930s and 1940s, including how musical genres and the activity of listening were defined by the different musical authorities and listeners. It provides an overview of the ubiquity of musical life in Britain during World War Two, outlining the different media and environments for musical experience examined in the following chapters; and considers the mediation of experiences through culture, language and writing, and the wartime narrative. It also explores how being at war altered the musical landscape and provided a new framework for conceptualising music and listening. The following chapters explore the different ways individual listeners interacted with these ideas in their everyday musical lives. Two broad cross-genre chapters frame separate discussions of classical and popular music cultures.

Chapter 2 considers the institution that brought the nation's listeners together across musical tastes: the BBC. Through letters written to the BBC, this chapter questions how the well-

⁸⁵ As acknowledged by Silvey, *Who's Listening?*, 28–30.

documented wartime changes made by the BBC affected the experiences of those who 'listened in' and their relationship with the organisation. By examining several prominent periods of change and controversy, this chapter explores musical listening opportunities within the unique nature of a wireless listening experience. It also gives particular attention to themes of identity and taste for listeners who found themselves navigating their position in a new 'democracy' in radio programming.

Chapter 3 studies a single listener, Lionel Bradley, and his experiences of London's classical music activity as it evolved through the Second World War. It questions what kind of listener Bradley was with respect to cultural ideals outlined in Chapter 1, how the nature of his experiences can be defined, and what his bulletins tell us about concert-going practices of the period. An examination of Bradley's patterns of attendance considers how the war had a complex, nuanced effect upon his listening experiences and his relationship with different bodies of repertoire.

Chapter 4 considers the popular music found in the dance hall, cinema, community concert, home and the street. Through an analysis of Frank Lewis's experience of popular music in Hollywood cinema, it questions the influence of American culture upon his life and aspirations in connection with dominant scholarly narratives. This is followed by an exploration of war-related music and listening circumstances, which questions how and why the listeners responded to music at these times. This chapter emphasises themes of taste, self-identity and mediation, and questions what listening to popular music meant in this period.

Chapter 5 analyses newspaper reviews of 'serious' and popular music and considers whether the professional element of writing and listening obscured the authenticity of the experiences they contain. The chapter is divided into three analyses: first, a study of two events within the opening months of war explores the relationship between wartime ideologies and musical experience, and critics' mediation of this in writing. Second, there is a focus on themes of language, terminology and structure in reviews as a demonstration of taste, community and musical identity. Third, the chapter returns to Lionel Bradley as an example of the readership of concert reviews, considering his relationship with reviews within his wider attitudes towards listening.

The conclusion draws together the three focuses of this thesis. It highlights the sites of tension and change, and shifts in perspective about listening, in relation to the cross-cultural commonalities the listeners demonstrate. Themes of public and individual, everyday and extraordinary experiences, identity and taste, mediation and the nature of listening, are drawn together to demonstrate the kaleidoscopic variety of listeners and experiences and the surprising juxtaposition of individual and shared responses and interests.

Chapter 1: The context for listening

This chapter explores the various media and environments for, and attitudes about, listening during the 1930s and 1940s. As such, it provides a contextual overview for the analyses that follow. It outlines the historical ideas and issues that informed contemporary thought on musical genres and listening, and the policy-making, industry and activity that underpinned the landscape of musical experience. Through this discussion, this chapter introduces the cross-cutting themes and ideas that recur across the thesis. The chapter has a tripartite structure that introduces broad but interlinked topics: firstly, musical genres and their audiences and industries; secondly, types of musical listening appropriate to these genres; and thirdly, the impact of the Second World War on musical activity and listening. The subsequent chapters discuss these topics in further detail.

1. Media and genres of music

This first section provides an overview of the broad expanse of opportunities for experiencing music: genres, media and environments that listeners would have encountered. Firstly, it outlines the different musical industries⁸⁶ and discusses the influence of music technologies in the 1930s. Secondly, the problematic, hierarchical delineation of genres is discussed with reference to audiences and popularity, the valuing of music, and the notion of ‘brows’. Examining the context of the musical landscape in the late 1930s demonstrates the situation to which listeners and the music industries were accustomed before World War Two. Zeigler defines this period, ‘the preamble, between the Munich crisis and 3 September 1939’, as the first of the ‘neatly defined compartments’ of war on the home front between 1938 and 1941.⁸⁷ In the following section this context is also discussed with reference to how listeners’ awareness of the growing tension in Europe played a role their relationships with music and the way their experiences were framed.

By the 1930s, there were three primary formats for musical experiences: live, broadcast, and recorded, each underpinned by a body of commercial processes and relationships. This distinction is important because each involved different attitudes towards listening (see below) and provided experiences set within different frameworks. There are several different ways of grouping these formats: by their domestic and public environments; as a distinction between live and ‘mechanized’ music industries;⁸⁸ or between mass commercial and traditional localised industries. Music-making involved several overlapping industries and trades that catered to specific media, environments and genres of music. Some were cross-cutting, such as the radio, gramophone,

⁸⁶ The term ‘music industry’ is used here in reference to the established industrialisation and commercialisation of music-making by the 1930s.

⁸⁷ Zeigler, *London at War*, 179.

⁸⁸ Nott, *Music for the People*, 9.

musical instrument trade, musical press, and publishing industries, and served several commercial markets. Others provided different types of music within distinct environments. These included dominant commercialised forms of leisure like the cinema and dance halls, and more localised but traditional forms of live music including classical concerts, music hall, and traditional and amateur dancing and music-making.

In the late 1930s, the British public enjoyed an unprecedented amount of access to music. The media for mass musical entertainment and cultural leisure, radio, gramophones, cinema and dancing, had risen dramatically in popularity during the 1930s and experienced widespread expansion across the nation.⁸⁹ As Spike Hughes wrote in 1945, 'there is no accurate way of checking how many people like what kind of music [...] no way of measuring the popularity of music'.⁹⁰ However, there were numerous comprehensive contemporary surveys on these popular cultural industries that offered socio-economic figures of their scope and audiences, which demonstrate the ubiquity of opportunities for listening to music in this period. Other media of musical experience were widely distributed across the nation and received little attention,⁹¹ and similar data are therefore not available. In some cases, histories of specific organisations offer pertinent details, but they do not represent the whole picture.⁹² The culture of classical music performance was particularly disregarded, although well-served by a large, regular press (see Chapter 5).

1.1. Mass entertainment and technology

The 'new' culture industries, dance halls, radio, gramophones and cinema, that had risen to mass popularity since the 1920s were to some extent nationalised cultures, with widespread and often universalised economic infrastructures. They provided the general public with access to music and leisure activities even in more remote, rural areas (see below). There were two domestic media of musical experience, radio and gramophone records, and two which were public and social, dancing and cinema-going.

⁸⁹ A number of studies give detailed discussions of the developments of the various industries during the preceding decades that led to this musical environment. See, for example, Asa Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Ehrlich, *The Music Profession; Harmonious Alliance: A History of the Performing Rights Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Simon Frith, 'The Pleasures of the Hearth: The Making of BBC Light Entertainment', in *Formations of Pleasure* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983); 'The Making of the British Record Industry 1920–64', in *Impacts and Influences: Essays on Media Power in the Twentieth Century*, ed. James Curran, Anthony Smith, and Pauline Wingate (London: Methuen); Nott, *Music for the People*.

⁹⁰ Spike Hughes, 'Popular Taste in Music', in *Pilot Papers: Social Essays and Documents*, ed. Charles Madge (London: The Pilot Press, 1945), 75.

⁹¹ As acknowledged by Nott, *Music for the People*, 9.

⁹² For example, Ehrlich, *First Philharmonic*; Doctor and Wright, *The Proms: A New History*.

Technological advances over the previous decades had enabled music to become a ubiquitous, and largely cheap, commodity, and had dramatically changed the general public's access to music and habits of listening (see below). Moreover, as Ehrlich argues, music technologies broke the link between musical demand and live performance, and increasingly privatised the listening experience.⁹³ As discussed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, technology had other far-reaching consequences for musical experience, including a heightened awareness of other musical genres. In particular, mass availability of high quality music via gramophone records and broadcasts offered the public unprecedented access to performances by the celebrities of musical culture: bandleaders, singers, Hollywood actors, virtuosi and conductors.

Gramophones and records were 'historically the first element in the explosion of mass media based entertainment' that became a popular form of musical entertainment for the middle and lower classes.⁹⁴ Since the 1920s the gramophone record industry had 'expanded exponentially', and by 1930 sixty percent of British households owned a gramophone and annual record sales were at sixty million.⁹⁵ By the mid-1930s 'there were gramophones to suit a wide range of incomes, ranging from the cheaper portables to the still fairly expensive radio gramophones'.⁹⁶ The price of records had also reduced dramatically, for example, dance records cost one shilling and sixpence.⁹⁷ Records of both popular and classical music were widely available, although marketed with different price brackets: classical music records cost significantly more.⁹⁸ The gramophone industry had become increasingly concentrated into a small number of dominant companies and popular record labels including EMI, Decca, Columbia, HMV and Parlophone.⁹⁹ However, even by 1939 alternate mass-entertainment industries, in particular cinema and radio, had taken a toll on record sales. The important changes brought about by records for listening practices are discussed below.

Dancing and cinema-going were dominant forms of mass entertainment and favoured social activities, through which the public were exposed to a wealth of music (see below and Chapter 4). Dancing rose to popularity as a favoured social activity during the interwar period: 'during the 1920s and 1930s, dancing was everywhere in Britain'.¹⁰⁰ During the 1930s, the dance industry developed through several 'booms' in the popularity of dancing and dance halls. It produced a large national infrastructure of purpose-built, luxurious dance halls and *palais de danse* in every major town and city, and 'circuits' of dance halls (the largest of which was the Mecca chain) that

⁹³ Ehrlich, *The Music Profession*, 211.

⁹⁴ Nott, *Music for the People*, 13.

⁹⁵ See Frith, 'The Making of the British Record Industry 1920–64'; Nott, *Music for the People*.

⁹⁶ *Music for the People*, 37.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁹⁸ MO FR49: Gramophone Records (JC, March 1940), 5–7.

⁹⁹ Nott, *Music for the People*, 26–7; Frith, 'The Making of the British Record Industry 1920–64'.

¹⁰⁰ Nott, *Going to the Palais*, 32.

helped to universalise dancing culture across Britain.¹⁰¹ Popular dance culture permeated the country, even in rural areas, where the public danced in temporary venues, such as church and assembly halls.¹⁰²

The cinema similarly rose to dominance in the 1920s, when the 'silent' era of cinema was also the nation's primary means of mass exposure to music (see below). Throughout the 1930s, 'the cinema was the dominant non-domestic leisure activity in Britain'.¹⁰³ Music was a prominent feature of films, and it remained customary in larger cinemas to have live 'musical interludes' on cinema organs in between film screenings (see Chapter 4).¹⁰⁴ Newly constructed 'super-cinemas' offered unprecedented luxury and facilities at cheap prices, available to all classes of the public. During the 1930s there were eighteen to nineteen million weekly cinema attendances,¹⁰⁵ which rose to twenty-three million by 1939: approximately 903 million annual admissions.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, the number of cinemas across Britain also increased substantially to 'just under 5,000' in 1939.¹⁰⁷

However, the popularity of records, cinema-going and dancing was eclipsed by that of radio. Ehrlich and Nicholas suggest that by 1935 '98 per cent of the population were equipped to listen to one BBC programme and 85 per cent had a choice' between the two BBC services.¹⁰⁸ Certainly, by 1939 there were approximately nine million licences, and '73 per cent of households nationwide owned a radio licence'.¹⁰⁹ The BBC reached between thirty-four and thirty-five million 'out of a national population of 48 million', approximately three-quarters of all households in 'all sections of society'.¹¹⁰ Annual wireless licences cost ten shillings, offering remarkably good value for the number of broadcast hours. Music formed a dominant part of the BBC's programming. As such, listeners had unprecedented access to music of all kinds: for dancing to, for concentrated listening and for general entertainment (see Chapter 2). The BBC had a monopoly over British radio and was an important patron of music. In the 1930s it became the largest employer of

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 26–7.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁰³ Nott, *Music for the People*, 86.

¹⁰⁴ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 387.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 419.

¹⁰⁶ Nott, *Music for the People*, 86.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁰⁸ Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*, 67; Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', 64. See also Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years*, 110; Andrew Crisell, *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting* (London: Routledge, 1997), 40; Siân Nicholas, 'The People's Radio: The BBC and Its Audience, 1939–1945', in *'Millions Like Us?': British Culture in the Second World War*, ed. N. Hayes and J. Hill (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 64. The BBC handbooks for the period give the figures in more detail, and show that the distribution of licences between England, Wales and Scotland was uneven. For example, *BBC Handbook 1938* (London: BBC), 73–5.

¹⁰⁹ Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', 63–4.

¹¹⁰ Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', 63–4; Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 362. See also Nott, *Music for the People*, 59; Asa Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless*, vol. II, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 253–5; Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 3.

musicians and provider of music in the nation, and by 1940 broadcasting provided fifty-four percent of the Performing Rights Society's income.¹¹¹

By the late 1930s, these 'new' mass culture industries had established structures and settings, and were supported by powerful instruments of musical promotion: recording, publishing, and broadcasting. With the exception of broadcasting, they were driven by economic rather than aesthetic values, and musical experience became part of a wider consumer culture that prioritised 'popular tastes' and sought popularity for their musical products. Overall, the 1930s were a time of 'economic downturn' in Britain, but the histories of these mass entertainment industries each document 'booms' of attendance and use that reinforced their centrality to British leisure habits.

1.2. Live music

Other media of live music existed within older, traditional practices that flourished in different regional communities across Britain, which were gaining widespread national exposure through musical technologies, especially broadcasting (see Chapter 2). Music was made across Britain by a profusion of professional and amateur groups, from cities to rural villages, in forms that covered a wide range of styles and musical genres. London remained an international centre for musical activity in the 1930s, the place where the best quality professional music could be heard, from dance bands to orchestras, at well-known venues. Traditional forms of popular music that dominated rural and working class leisure, such as music hall, still flourished as well.

A large number of cities and towns, from urban centres such as London, Manchester and Liverpool to seaside resorts such as Bournemouth, housed professional orchestras and opera companies in dedicated concert halls, theatres and opera houses.¹¹² Their culture was served by a long-established enterprise of concert promotion and industry.¹¹³ Musical societies provided regular concert series and festivals for 'serious' music (including opera and choral music) that shaped annual 'seasons'. The 1930s had brought new models of co-operative and annually salaried orchestras in London that affected the quality of performances and available repertoire (see Chapter 3).

¹¹¹ *Victory through Harmony*, 3; Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*, 160. See also Nicholas, *The Echo of War*, 12; Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 181.

¹¹² For a discussion of the development of the 'modern' concert venues of the early twentieth century, see Simon McVeigh and Cyril Ehrlich, 'The Modernisation of London Concert Life around 1900', in *The Business of Music*, ed. Michael Talbot (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002). Their analysis of their features and function offers an interesting comparison, with the histories described by Nott and McKibbin (referenced above). The development of 'super-cinemas' and *palais* several decades later mirrored and updated the interests of concert-halls, although focused on their patron's comfort as opposed to their listening attitudes (see Chapters 2 and 4).

¹¹³ See *ibid.*

Professional musicians also performed in a variety of commercial environments as ‘background music’ to accompany eating, drinking and socialising. Since the early twentieth century many hotels, restaurants and cafés had employed professional musicians to provide background music for ‘economic purposes’ (that is, the satisfaction of their patrons).¹¹⁴ Dance bands were a prominent feature of this culture. The notion of ‘background music’ is discussed further below and in Chapter 2, as part of an important re-conception of functional music and listening that was ‘a turning-point in the history of music in Britain’.¹¹⁵ Live music was also an important part of the dance culture, and to a lesser extent cinema-going, discussed above, in which it existed between the foreground and background as an integral part of multi-modal experiences (discussed further below in part 2).

A considerable amount of community music-making also continued to thrive across Britain: orchestras, brass bands, choral societies, and music societies aimed at listening and appreciation remained prominent and actively practised traditions. Brass bands ‘still occupied an important role in the working-class musical culture’, despite a declining interest from their peak in the nineteenth century’.¹¹⁶ Indeed, they were widely popular with listeners across the country via broadcasting, as Chapter 2 explores. Choral societies were a ‘nation-wide affair’ from towns to villages.¹¹⁷ Folk dancing had similarly dedicated following, as MO diaries evidence.¹¹⁸ Community singing had risen to popularity in the 1920s and still formed an important part of listeners’ experiences of music, as Chapter 4 demonstrates.¹¹⁹ These structures of music-making were an important part of the access and experience people had to music, but have remained largely invisible in the scholarship of the period.

By the late 1930s, music-making in Britain existed within vast, overlapping cultures and practice, with established patterns of provision and relationships with their respective audiences and participants. The newer forms of mass leisure had successfully built upon the older, traditional models of live music provision and promotion, concert-going and music hall, mirroring the developments of the early twentieth century.¹²⁰ However, the 1930s were also coloured by numerous controversies, related to issues as broad as the Musicians Union’s fight against American jazz musicians, orchestral re-structures, and the BBC’s song-plugging battle.¹²¹ These

¹¹⁴ Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*, 19–20.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹¹⁶ Nott, *Music for the People*, 5.

¹¹⁷ Hughes, ‘Popular Taste in Music’, 93–4.

¹¹⁸ For example, Eileen Potter regularly attended her local folk dancing club. See Garfield, *We Are at War*.

¹¹⁹ Nott suggests that community singing had only a ‘brief’ phrase of popularity in the 1920s, an assertion with which Chapter 4 disagrees. Nott, *Music for the People*, 5.

¹²⁰ See note 112.

¹²¹ Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*, 74–5; *The Music Profession*.

issues marred the relationships between industries and foreshadowed the debates that concerned the 'musical establishment'¹²² during the Second World War.

1.3. Defining musical genres

Alongside the different types of musical experiences that occurred through the varied environments and media, differences in musical genre added another element to their distinction. By the later 1930s there were three broad, and somewhat fluidly delineated categories of music: 'serious', 'light' and 'popular'.¹²³ Different sources have distinguished between these categories based on notions of musical quality, style, popularity, or the publics that liked them. For example, McKibbin describes three musical publics with a fluid relationship and overlapping tastes in repertory: 'a very small public for "serious" music, a considerably larger one for "middlebrow" music, and a much larger one for "popular music"'.¹²⁴ Nott suggests that a more appropriate distinction might be drawn between serious music and the dominance of 'non-serious or popular music, as represented by the categories 'dance music' and 'light music''.¹²⁵ Silvey suggests that the three categories were more 'levels of music' than kinds, implying a hierarchy of quality that followed the prevalent attitudes of the period, which privileged 'serious' music as *better* music.¹²⁶ As discussed below, the latter concept influenced ideas about appropriate listening behaviours and the attentiveness expected of audiences.

'Serious music' included orchestral music, chamber music, opera, and solo recitals, with the repertoire ranging from the established canon of master composers to 'modern' music. Serious music was often called 'Good Music', and Hughes argues that popular taste for it was 'a most elusive thing to define', centred on 'crazes' for specific composers.¹²⁷ Notable crazes in the 1930s included Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Bach, and Sibelius. Serious music is perhaps the easiest to define, for it had a long and well-established cultural and performance history by this period, which related in particular to the emergence of public concerts since the turn of the century.¹²⁸

¹²² Ehrlich defines the 'musical establishment' as 'critics, academics, and impresarios'. If officials from the BBC and gramophone industries, the music appreciation movement, and those in positions of policy-making power are added to this, the term becomes a useful way to distinguish between those who defined music and listening in contrast to those who experienced and sought to understand them (that is, the listeners). *Harmonious Alliance*, 105.

¹²³ Various scholars have used these distinctions, including Baade, *Victory through Harmony*; McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*; Nott, *Music for the People*; Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*. See also Hughes, 'Popular Taste in Music'.

¹²⁴ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 416.

¹²⁵ Nott, *Music for the People*, 59–60.

¹²⁶ Silvey, *Who's Listening?*, 66.

¹²⁷ Hughes, 'Popular Taste in Music', 93–8.

¹²⁸ See McVeigh and Ehrlich, 'The Modernisation of London Concert Life around 1900'; Nicholls, Hall, and Forgasz, 'Charting the Past'.

Repertoire was a key component in the delineation of serious music, and the margins between canonical and unfamiliar repertoire defined the boundaries of specific audiences' tastes and listening habits. Within the culture of serious music there was an established hierarchy that prized chamber and modern music as the height of highbrow tastes, to which many listeners subscribed (discussed further in Chapter 2). These repertoires were 'the delight [...] of the listening connoisseur', and were 'totally unfamiliar to the average man'.¹²⁹ As such they were privileged by those in the musical establishment that worked hard to raise public tastes for serious music. Conversely, popular classics were considered 'conservative' and 'hackneyed' by some (see Chapter 3), but favoured by the public. This repertoire was regularly programmed, especially by institutions that sought to raise popular taste in serious music, or for whom the box office was a dominant consideration.¹³⁰ As such, there was a broad split within the establishment between those who favoured artistic quality, and those who sought widespread popularity for the repertoire, with particular reference to the BBC (see Chapter 2).¹³¹ Programming policies dictated the public's access to unfamiliar, contemporary and unrecorded repertoire, as discussed in Chapter 3.

During the 1930s and 1940s 'popular music' was a loose category that encompassed commercially popular, traditional, and niche connoisseur styles that represented 'gradations of taste within uneven degrees of legitimacy and status', somewhat similarly to serious music.¹³² These included dance music, vocalists, and traditional 'folk' forms. Popular music, especially dance music, has widespread popularity across the nation. 'Industrial' dance music had three prominent forms: mainstream dance music, which largely meant a 'straight' ballroom style (the dominant dances in the interwar period remained the waltz, foxtrot and quick-step); swing, commercial 'unintellectual' jazz that gained popularity in the late 1930s;¹³³ and 'hot' jazz, which was a connoisseur 'cult' culture where listeners gathered in 'rhythm clubs' and critiqued records.¹³⁴ In the late 1930s, vocalists were a prominent part of dance band culture, although some broke away to pursue solo careers during World War Two. During the war, prominent and controversial styles included crooners and sentimental song (see Chapter 2). Popular music also encompassed traditional genres of entertainment in which music was an important component, including music hall and variety, and regional traditions of music and dance (that is, a 'folk' definition of popular

¹²⁹ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 217.

¹³⁰ For example, the Proms, a well-known populist concert series. Jennifer Doctor, 'The Parataxis of "British Musical Modernism"', *Musical Quarterly* 91 (2008). See also Ehrlich's discussion of the 1930s and 1940s RPS: Ehrlich, *First Philharmonic*.

¹³¹ See Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 194–201.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 217.

¹³³ See *ibid.*, 217; Hughes, 'Popular Taste in Music', 85–8.

¹³⁴ 'Popular Taste in Music', 85–8; Christina Baade, '"The Dancing Front": Dance Music, Dancing, and the BBC in World War II', *Popular Music* 25, no. 3, Special Issue on Dance (2006), 349.

music as that of 'the people').¹³⁵ There was also a 'vigorous' tradition of sentimental ballad and novelty song, which appealed widely to an older generation and 'almost certainly' had a larger public than that for jazz-inspired music.¹³⁶

'Popular music' is difficult to define, not least because during the 1930s some of its distinguishing terms were used synonymously by different contemporary sources. For example, 'jazz' was often confused with dance music and swing, and 'only specialised critics and fans were able – or considered it important – to distinguish' between them.¹³⁷ Many modern scholars study the 'popular music' of the period;¹³⁸ however contemporary sources suggest that 'dance music' was a more frequently understood and used category (see Chapter 2). A key distinction is that popular music appealed to a variety of audiences, who listened to it for a variety of reasons: for dancing to, for entertainment, and for 'serious' listening (see below).

An important feature of popular music by the 1930s was the influence of American styles of music and performance, which had been a continual element of British popular music (and culture more widely) throughout the interwar period, as discussed in Chapter 4.¹³⁹ Prominent American influences included the interwar arrival of 'jazz', followed by swing in the late 1930s.¹⁴⁰ Mainstream dance culture was largely an anglicized hybrid of traditional British idioms and American influences.¹⁴¹ Britain's intellectual elite had long been concerned about the threat of American culture, and believed that the British working class were becoming 'Americanised' through exposure to styles of music, language, mannerisms and the glamour of American star culture.¹⁴² The traditional British brass band culture was also hostile to the 'Americanisation' of popular music, in particular dance music and its star bandleaders, under the impact of which it 'had lost its privileged position in the popular culture of industrial Britain.'¹⁴³

The third category, 'light music', was the most fluid. It encompassed the most populist and conservative types of music that crossed the distinction between 'serious' and 'popular'.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁵ Nott, *Music for the People*, 30–4.

¹³⁶ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 415.

¹³⁷ Baade, "'The Dancing Front'", 349.

¹³⁸ For example, *Victory through Harmony*; Nott, *Music for the People*.

¹³⁹ For a detailed discussion of this history see: Genevieve Abravanel, *Americanizing Britain: The Rise of Modernism in the Age of the Entertainment Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*. Baade offers an excellent explanation of the complex distinctions in styles: Baade, "'The Dancing Front'".

¹⁴⁰ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 390.

¹⁴¹ Baade, "'The Dancing Front'"; McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 397.

¹⁴² This idea is the site of considerable discourse and myth-making in the literature; well-grounded discussion are found in Abravanel, *Americanizing Britain*; Mark Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain: From the 1920s to the Present* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014). They argue that fears about American culture were a part of Britain's wider political relationship with its former colony, and part of an idealised image of American life.

¹⁴³ Russell, "'What's Wrong with Brass Bands?'" , 108–9.

¹⁴⁴ See Nott, *Music for the People*, 60–1.

McKibbin describes it as the 'enormously popular music which occupied that wide grey area between 'serious' and 'not-serious'.¹⁴⁵ An 'indigenous' British category,¹⁴⁶ light music was the most predominantly enjoyed type of music in the 1930s, although 'no one could agree about its scope and functions'.¹⁴⁷ However, a number of sources hint towards the expansiveness of the category, based as much in ensembles and environments as in repertoire. Thus, light music included: well-known orchestral overtures and highlights, light orchestral music, light opera and operetta, opera selections, 'seaside music', cinema organ music,¹⁴⁸ contemporary dance and song successes, sentimental songs, ballads, novelty items (usually songs), 'tea shop', café and restaurant music, piano trios, musical comedy, and traditional songs.¹⁴⁹ This repertoire was drawn from many of the musical traditions of the preceding decades, in particular the silent cinema, brass bands, choral societies, populist concerts, variety shows, and live 'background music'. In 1945, Spike Hughes described light music as Strauss waltzes, Sousa marches, musical comedy, and opera selections, played by trios, sextets, military bands, cinema organs, theatre orchestras and salon quintets.¹⁵⁰ He argued that 'the "light" music public thinks of the music it wants in terms of tea-time trios, of palm-court orchestras and end-of-pier bands'.¹⁵¹

Light music is commonly considered to be reflective of an indiscriminating, 'uneducated',¹⁵² and conservative middle-aged, middle-class taste in music. Importantly, some scholars have equated parts of the light music repertory with 'middlebrow music', defined as 'canon' of respectable light music.¹⁵³ An important component of this were 'popular classics', the repertoire that much of the public considered to be serious music.¹⁵⁴ 'Popular classics' is a term used to describe the widely familiar repertoire of the classical music canon, established through the public's exposure to the traditional repertoire of brass bands and choral societies;¹⁵⁵ the arrangement of classical music of the silent cinema era;¹⁵⁶ film music such as Richard Addinsell's highly successful Rachmaninov-style 'Warsaw Concerto', composed for the 1941 film *Dangerous Moonlight*, which achieved mass popularity; and populist concert series intended to familiarise the public with standard canonical repertoire.¹⁵⁷ Hayes argues that there was a 'large and relatively unadventurous "middlebrow"

¹⁴⁵ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 388.

¹⁴⁶ Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*, 105.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹⁴⁸ The category 'cinema music' includes its own list of well-known repertory familiarised during the 1920s: sentimental songs, well-loved ballads, arrangements of popular classical composers, country dances, hornpipes, overtures, opera highlights and 'lollipops'. McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 388.

¹⁴⁹ See Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*, 105; Nott, *Music for the People*, 60–1.

¹⁵⁰ Hughes, 'Popular Taste in Music', 75–90.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁵³ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 417.

¹⁵⁴ See Silvey, *Who's Listening?*, 66.

¹⁵⁵ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 388.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 388; Ehrlich, *The Music Profession*, 196–8.

¹⁵⁷ See Doctor, 'The Parataxis of "British Musical Modernism"'.
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musical audience of catholic rather than discriminating taste'.¹⁵⁸ However, not all listeners of middlebrow tastes were indiscriminating: as Chapter 2 explores, light music also appealed to 'self-improving' listeners who 'wanted to appreciate good music but did not know how'.¹⁵⁹

It is generally accepted that by the 1930s, the intelligentsia and most of the public had an understanding of the 'pyramid' of cultural tastes that made up the distinction between highbrow, middlebrow and lowbrow 'taste publics'.¹⁶⁰ The terms had particular currency in discussions of radio, a medium that brought all types of music and tastes into close proximity. Indeed, as Chapter 2 demonstrates, listeners identified themselves with these terms, with equal reference to the music they hated as much as that they loved. Moreover, within each field 'there was a hierarchy of tastes that fragmented the unity of these categories'.¹⁶¹ This reflected the divisions of genre discussed above, particularly the analogous distinctions in serious and popular music between niche, connoisseur genres (chamber and modern music, and hot jazz) and widely popular ones. This way of discussing tastes also reflects the tension between serious and popular music that was based on the notion of musical quality. Patrons of serious music culture, music-lovers and establishment alike, felt that serious music was *better* music, although this was not always explicitly stated.¹⁶² The BBC also provided an example of how different types of music were valued. Before World War Two, the BBC promoted serious music as part of a wider mission of 'cultural uplift', and sought to re-adjust popular music as 'respectable middlebrow entertainment' performed by 'theatre organs and sophisticated dance bands'.¹⁶³ Moreover, its music output was divided between the Music and Variety Departments, that respectively provided 'serious' and 'non-serious' music (that is, light and dance music).¹⁶⁴

The distinction between serious, light and popular music was not always considered helpful at the time. For example, military bands have an unclear place: they were genuinely and widely popular, and yet for example, were often given their own category in discussions of music and tastes, and in the listings of BBC output.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, contemporary discussions of genre demarcation suggest that whilst listeners were happy to use the terms 'serious' and 'light' music (see Chapter 2), those who provided the music, especially the BBC, chose more concrete ways of dividing musical genres as ambiguity caused 'demarcation disputes'.¹⁶⁶ For example, in the BBC's first survey into their listeners' tastes in 1938, they listed Orchestral Music, Piano Recitals, Violin Recitals, Vocal

¹⁵⁸ Hayes, 'More Than "Music-While-You-Eat"?', 213–4.

¹⁵⁹ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 213.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 181, 207. See also Guthrie, 'Music and Cultural Values in 1940s Britain'.

¹⁶¹ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 207.

¹⁶² See Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*, 72.

¹⁶³ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 3–4.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 5–6.

¹⁶⁵ See Hughes, 'Popular Taste in Music'; Silvey, *Who's Listening?*.

¹⁶⁶ *Who's Listening?*, 66.

Recitals, Chamber Music, Grand Opera, Light Opera and Operettas, Light Music, Brass Bands, Military Bands, and Theatre and Cinema Organs.¹⁶⁷

If nothing else, all this variety demonstrates two things. Firstly, that there was an incredibly large amount of music available to the general public in the late 1930s, and a myriad of styles, ensembles, and environments in which it was heard. Secondly, that public taste and popularity had an important and influential role in the prominence of these different types of music in the daily life of Britain.

2. Listening attitudes and practices

The second part of this chapter concerns the activity and concept of 'listening'. It discusses contemporary idealisations of listening with reference to traditional social and cultural values, and current academic typologies. Particular consideration is given to the distinctions between public and domestic, and attentive and participatory listening that correspond with the different environments and media for musical experience. This section also analyses five articles written for *The Listener* in early 1939 on the subject of listening, to demonstrate the relationship between these and real listeners' attitudes and preconceptions. The mediation of listening experiences through cultural values and knowledge, environments and media, and the act of documenting them in writing, is also explored.

As established, by the late 1930s a public of diverse musical tastes experienced music in a wide variety of environments and media. Moreover, they encountered music for a number of reasons: as a background to other activities or experiences, for entertainment, in order to dance, or 'listen' with concentration to appreciate the music. As Bashford has argued, 'one of the major difficulties of discussing listening in historical terms arises from the fact that the term can be defined and understood in many ways', dependent on the type of music, the listener's own predilections, 'the nature and circumstances of the performance', and the prevailing social conditions.¹⁶⁸ This thesis, like the LED project, has defined 'the experience of listening to music' to mean broadly any musical experience that 'left an impression on the mind' of the individual.¹⁶⁹ The intention is to question the distinctions between musical experiences through the broader similarity that united them: that these experiences were significant enough to be recorded. In practice, therefore, this definition of listening experience encompasses many different attitudes and behaviours.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁶⁸ Bashford, 'Learning to Listen', 25.

¹⁶⁹ Rowland, 'Introduction'. Born has also suggested this is an important conceptual move to make: Georgina Born, 'Listening, Mediation, Event: Anthropological and Sociological Perspectives', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 135, Special Issue 1 (2010), 80.

2.1. Appropriate listening

Several scholars have demonstrated how the development of discerning, 'educated' listeners was an important part of the cultural inheritance of the Romantic era, which laid the foundation of the cultural and social practices of twentieth-century concert-going.¹⁷⁰ A prominent part of this literature has been aimed at proving the observable shift in listening habits and behaviours in the nineteenth century, during which silent, 'absorbed' listening replaced the habits of eating and drinking, socialising and calling out. Szendy describes this as a shift from 'pleasure listening' to 'academic listening', which was increasingly valued as an 'educated musical act'.¹⁷¹ The still, quiet demeanour that accompanied this was considered respectful to the music and other audience members, and as Clarke suggests, could helpfully persuade other listeners of the significance of the inner experience.¹⁷² This mode of listening behaviour, the 'cultural inheritance of the concert-hall', is still prevalent in modern culture and is often implicit in the way concert-going and listening to classical music is discussed.¹⁷³ This behavioural shift provides an important cultural backdrop to the listening habits of the 1930s, informing the understood social etiquette of listening to 'serious' music (see Chapter 3), the ideals of proper appreciation of music, and wider cultural attitudes and values of the broadcasting and recording industries. This shift also presented new 'types' of listeners as well as listening attitudes. Moreover, Nicholls, Hall and Forgasz describe the birth of 'new cultural phenomenon', the 'amateur listener', for whom the ability to listen attentively and 'articulate one's ideas about music was now a cultural pastime as serious as playing, reading, or writing music'.¹⁷⁴ This idea forms an important model for Chapter 3.

By the 1930s there were three main intertwined bodies of opinion about what listening to music was and how it should be approached: the 'music appreciation movement', radio, and gramophone authorities. Each had an interest in educating their audiences to listen in culturally appropriate, respectable ways, in an era of 'cultural uplift'. The musical appreciation movement attempted to educate the general public in how to listen in a 'musically-informed' way through 'an intellectual understanding' of music, which was thought to enhance listening experiences.¹⁷⁵ An outpouring of educational literature was published during the early twentieth century that sought to teach people how to listen, properly appreciate serious music, and understand its culture. Listeners could fortify their knowledge with popular reference guides and encyclopaedias,

¹⁷⁰ Nicholls, Hall, and Forgasz, 'Charting the Past', 7. See also Botstein, 'Listening through Reading'. Bashford, 'Learning to Listen: Audiences for Chamber Music in Early-Victorian London'.

¹⁷¹ Peter Szendy, *Listen: A History of Our Ears* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 117; Nicholls, Hall, and Forgasz, 'Charting the Past', 7.

¹⁷² Eric F. Clarke, 'The Impact of Recording on Listening', *twentieth-century music* 4, no. 1 (2007), 64.

¹⁷³ Nicholls, Hall, and Forgasz, 'Charting the Past'. For example, Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998).

¹⁷⁴ Nicholls, Hall, and Forgasz, 'Charting the Past', 9.

¹⁷⁵ Bashford, 'Learning to Listen', 27; Nicholls, Hall, and Forgasz, 'Charting the Past'.

programme notes and musical analyses, which enabled them to become musically literate, 'informed' listeners (see Chapter 3).¹⁷⁶ For example, in 1935 Percy Scholes published 'a little book of First Aid for the Puzzled Listener', *The Radio Times Music Handbook*. It was a guide to over a thousand musical terms that 'the musically educated world would recognize' but which formed 'the indigestible chunks' that BBC announcers, concert notices and programme notes 'frequently rattled off or thrust before the public'.¹⁷⁷

The music appreciation movement was intertwined with the technological media of musical experience. Technology was an important part of contemporary thought about listening. Over the preceding decades it had revolutionised the public's relationship with music, widening access to genres, repertoire and musicians. Records were a central part of this new relationship: they enabled repeat experiences, and listeners gained an aural knowledge that existed in their heads and informed their listening experiences.¹⁷⁸ Listeners could amass a library of music to be endlessly replayed and appreciated, and as such records became an important educative tool, both before and later alongside the radio, as a means to build familiarity with repertoire and provoke intellectual discussion in rhythm clubs and listening groups.¹⁷⁹ By the 1930s, intellectual listening was common to both serious music and popular music cultures, practised by connoisseur jazz listeners, 'self-improving' middlebrow listeners, and predominant in concert-hall practice.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, listeners were informed by the musical press, which offered models for critical opinions (see Chapter 5), and by the radio, which featured programmes for the connoisseur of both serious and jazz culture. Music appreciation was also central to the BBC's educative ideal of raising the public taste for music.¹⁸¹ The BBC offered broadcast talks on music, by educators such as Walford Davies and Percy Scholes, designed to develop listeners' appreciation for 'worthy', canonical serious music,¹⁸² for example, the long-running music appreciation programme *Foundations of Music* (established in 1923).¹⁸³

Technological listening was predominantly a domestic experience, and in the early 1930s when music technologies were concerned with gaining middle-class respectability, they were 'thought

¹⁷⁶ See 'Charting the Past', 11. For example, numerous music appreciation publications by Sir Walford Davies and Percy Scholes, such as Scholes' *The Listener's Guide to Music* (1919), *Everybody's Guide to Radio Music* (1926), and *Music Appreciation: Its History and Techniques* (1935).

¹⁷⁷ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 214–6.

¹⁷⁸ Antoine Hennion, 'Music Lovers: Taste as Performance', *Theory, Culture & Society* 18, no. 5 (2001), 5.

¹⁷⁹ See Baade, "'The Dancing Front'"; Frith, "More Than Meets the Ear". A number of MO diaries record experiences of listening groups and lectures. See Pam Ashford, 12/10/40, quoted in Garfield, *We Are at War*, 393–4. Pam Ashford, 14/12/40, and Ernest van Someren, 12/40 and 12/03/41, quoted in Garfield, *Private Battles*, 28, 32, 84.

¹⁸⁰ Baade, "'The Dancing Front'", 349. See also Frith, "More Than Meets the Ear".

¹⁸¹ *Victory through Harmony*, 20.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁸³ Nicholls, Hall, and Forgasz, 'Charting the Past', 11.

of as an occasional resource, like the theatre, cinema or concert hall'.¹⁸⁴ As with concert-hall practices in the early 1900s,¹⁸⁵ in the 1930s, the BBC's programme building 'was designed to encourage attentive listening and to discourage the lazy listener'.¹⁸⁶ Early gramophone listening was expected to be treated as a concert: with an audience assembled to listen with similar etiquette to a machine presented in replacement of live musicians. Listeners were expected to 'invest the event with a sense of occasion', and listen quietly and attentively.¹⁸⁷ Clarke suggests that listeners often closed or averted their eyes in a 'quasi-religious demeanour' and applauded afterwards.¹⁸⁸

In the early 1930s, the BBC was particularly concerned with cultivating an appropriate mode of listening among its audience, which took 'full advantage' of what public service radio offered.¹⁸⁹ It thus expected its audience to embody the behaviour of the attentive, 'serious' listener: 'Listeners must help to make the ideal work by attentive listening, by a careful selection from the goods on offer'.¹⁹⁰ For example, in 1930 the *B.B.C. Year-Book* featured a full page advert, which exhorted listeners in capital letters to pay proper attention to their listening environment, choose programmes intelligently, and listen carefully and constructively in the domestic sphere 'as you do in a theatre or concert hall', even identifying correct physical behaviours.¹⁹¹ It argued that 'You can't get the best out of a programme if your mind is wandering, or if you are playing bridge or reading. Give it your full attention. Try turning out the lights so that your eye is not caught by familiar objects in the room. Your imagination will be twice as vivid'.¹⁹²

However, Scannell and Cardiff argue that 'it is unlikely that any part of the audience behaved itself as ideally as it was supposed to [...] Most people most of the time, irrespective of class, gender or education, treated the wireless as no more than a domestic utility for relaxation and entertainment – a convenience, a commodity, a cheerful noise in the background'.¹⁹³ Unlike the public concert-hall environment, there was no-one, save family members, present to watch or inspire listeners to behave with decorum. The domestic environment also lacked the sense of occasion, or place apart from everyday life. This suggests that only those with a truly 'serious' attitude towards listening and musical appreciation, and strong cultural knowledge and awareness, might behave as was expected of them.

¹⁸⁴ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 373. See also Frith, 'The Making of the British Record Industry 1920–64'.

¹⁸⁵ Nicholls, Hall, and Forgasz, 'Charting the Past', 8.

¹⁸⁶ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 371.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 373.

¹⁸⁸ Clarke, 'The Impact of Recording on Listening', 63–4.

¹⁸⁹ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 370.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 370–1.

¹⁹¹ *The B.B.C. Year-Book 1930*, (London: BBC), 61. See also Filson Young, 'Intelligent Listening', *ibid.*, 231–2.

¹⁹² *The B.B.C. Year-Book 1930*, 61.

¹⁹³ *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 373.

Although attentive listening was prized by the contemporary musical establishment, it only accounted for part of the public's broader experiences of music. In understanding the differences between educated, concentrated listening and the widespread experiences of dance, cinema music and background music, Frith and Herbert's discussions of listening typologies are useful.¹⁹⁴ Herbert explores listening as multisensory and multimodal (sensory, cognitive, affective), arguing that the rich value of aesthetic experiences for listeners often comes from an acknowledgement of this environment.¹⁹⁵ This concept has particular resonance in the following discussions of ideology, environment and the effect of war. Moreover, experiencing live music was often a public occasion that involved 'participation in a collective event' where the emphasis of the experience was on the social aspect (see Chapters 4 and 5).¹⁹⁶ For example, dancing involved fluidly equivalent visual, physical, musical and social stimuli that could capture the attention.

There is a large body of academic literature concerned with the typology of listening, usually presented as a set of oppositions, which Born and Herbert describe as 'reductive binarisms', between 'good' (as in proper, or appropriate) listening practices and their negations.¹⁹⁷ They commonly present a split between the notion of 'active' listening and 'passive' hearing.¹⁹⁸ The former is implied to be a conscious, attentive, intentional focus that entails a musical understanding; the latter inadvertent 'overhearing' that is inattentive, superficial and disengaged.¹⁹⁹ As Herbert acknowledges, this is also dominantly presented as the difference between autonomous, music-centric listening and 'heteronomous ('about' music and other things)' experiences.²⁰⁰ Attentive listening is cognitive, requiring the listener's effort and engagement, and often involves a conscious anticipation of the temporal structure and content of the music.²⁰¹ As such, other types of engagement with music (for example spiritual, emotional, physiological and physical) that produce different responses within the listener, are typically ignored. However, Frith offers a useful tripartite model that discusses 'participatory' listening as important mode of engagement.²⁰²

¹⁹⁴ Frith, 'More Than Meets the Ear'; Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening'.

¹⁹⁵ 'Modes of Music Listening'.

¹⁹⁶ Hennion, 'Music Lovers', 4.

¹⁹⁷ Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening'; Born, 'Listening, Mediation, Event', 81.

¹⁹⁸ Rowland, 'Introduction'; Born, 'Listening, Mediation, Event', 81. A selection of the relevant literature that discusses or engages with these idealisations includes: Bashford, 'Learning to Listen'; Born, 'Listening, Mediation, Event'; Botstein, 'Listening through Reading'; 'The Audience', *Musical Quarterly* 83, no. 4 (Winter) (1999); Cressman, 'Listening, Attentive Listening, and Musical Meaning'; Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*; Frith, 'More Than Meets the Ear'; Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening'; Johnson, *Listening in Paris*; Rowland, 'Introduction'; Szendy, *Listen*.

¹⁹⁹ Ehrlich applies the term 'overhearing' specifically to experiences of background music, in contrast with 'direct' listening. Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*, 66, 93.

²⁰⁰ Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening'.

²⁰¹ Burland and Pitts have applied this argument to the 'involved' listening and anticipation that live jazz music engenders in its audiences. Burland and Pitts, 'Understanding Jazz Audiences', 133.

²⁰² Frith, 'More Than Meets the Ear'.

Frith distinguishes between serious, participatory and secondary listening.²⁰³ 'Serious' listening is attentive, autonomous, and describes a serious attitude towards listening in a culturally appropriate, undistracted, self-aware, silent manner (as privileged by the BBC, for example). 'Participatory listening' is 'listening by music-making', ranging from performance and audience participation through conventionalised behaviour, to dancing as a physical response to music.²⁰⁴ Frith argues that in participatory listening, the various multi-sensory and multi-modal elements of the experience are equal. 'Secondary' listening is when the act of listening is subordinate to other activities and senses, which he relates to cinematic experiences of music. Although Frith's typology is an important model for conceptualising the musical experiences that predominated in popular culture in the 1930s and 1940s, Chapter 4 presents a case for cinema-going as an engaged, attentive and serious experience, in which the spectacle and music are equally integral stimuli.

A further interesting perspective on both 'serious' and 'participatory' listening considers the listener's self-awareness of his or her listening behaviours, attentiveness and engagement. Herbert suggests that a 'distributed, fluctuating attentional awareness and multimodal focus are central to many experiences of hearing music'.²⁰⁵ She conceptualises listening as a model of fluctuating consciousness of five 'interacting variables', attention, awareness, the visual aspect, changes in thought, and perceptions of time.²⁰⁶ This is strikingly similar to Szendy's 'responsible' way of listening, one which requires (or accepts) a 'wavering' of attention that enables the listener to account for both the music and the act of listening.²⁰⁷ Hennion also suggests that routine listening involves wavering attention and engagement.²⁰⁸ Several scholars also discuss the effect of self-awareness on the performative aspect of listening behaviour, as part of which listeners might overtly perform their listening through physical behaviour in a manner that encourages increasing self-reflection.²⁰⁹ These important acknowledgements are discussed further in the following chapters as listeners' experiences are analysed, in particular Chapters 3 and 4.

2.2. 'How I Listen to Music'

An interesting illustration of the diverse ways music and listening were thought about in the late 1930s is the series of five articles called 'How I Listen to Music' published in *The Listener* between

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening'.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ Szendy, *Listen*, 104, 122.

²⁰⁸ Hennion, 'Music Lovers', 11.

²⁰⁹ Botstein, 'The Audience'; Ian Cross, 'Listening as Covert Performance', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 135, Special Issue 1 (2010); William Fitzgerald, 'Listening, Ancient and Modern', *ibid.*

January and April 1939.²¹⁰ The articles were written by intellectuals including the author E.M. Forster (1879-1970), the art critic and historian R.H. Wilenski (1887-1975), the poet and playwright Robert Nichols (1893-1944) and the music critic M.D. Calvocoressi (1877-1944).²¹¹ One letter from a self-professed 'humble musical amateur' was also published in response.²¹² These men were all established in their fields by 1939, which may have been the reason they were chosen for this series of articles. Of the four, Forster and Calvocoressi have the most evident involvement with music; there is no indication that the other three wrote publically about music or musical experiences in other sources.

Forster was a well-known novelist and literary critic and member of the 'Bloomsbury set'; several of his novels, including *Howards End* (1910), explore musical themes and the musical experiences of their protagonists, and Forster's relationship with music has been the subject of a number of academic studies.²¹³ Wilenski worked for the War Office intelligence department in the First World War, before developing a career as a newspaper art critic and exhibition reviewer, university lecturer and author of historical surveys of art.²¹⁴ Nichols was a highly-acclaimed soldier-poet of the First World War, who later spent time in Japan as a lecturer and essayist and in Hollywood as a playwright, before returning to England in 1926, where he '[found] his pleasures in music, the fine arts, conversation, and letter-writing'.²¹⁵ Calvocoressi became a music critic in Europe in 1902 before moving to London during the First World War; he also worked as a libretto translator and wrote a number of books on Mussorgsky and Russian music, and didactic texts including *Musical Taste and How to Form It* (London, 1925).²¹⁶

As listeners who favoured serious music, their arguments provide an interesting perspective on the relationship between the idealised behaviours and attitudes described above, and are compared with Lionel Bradley in Chapter 3. The articles touch on a number of important themes:

²¹⁰ E.M. Forster, 'How I Listen to Music—I', *The Listener*, 19/01/39; R.H. Wilenski, 'How I Listen to Music—II', *ibid.*, 02/02/39; P. de Lande Long, 'How I Listen to Music—III', *ibid.*, 02/03/39; Robert Nichols, 'How I Listen to Music—IV', *ibid.*, 23/03/39; M.D. Calvocoressi, 'How I Listen to Music—V', *ibid.*, 13/04/39. Forster also published his article as an essay entitled 'Not Listening to Music' (1939), which has been referenced by Kramer as an example of structural and associative types of music and listening, with respect to musical meaning. Lawrence Kramer, *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History* (London: University of California Press, 2002), 161.

²¹¹ No information can be found about the author of the second article, P. de Lande Long.

²¹² Ella Stubbings, 'How I Listen to Music', *The Listener*, 09/02/39, 322.

²¹³ Nicola Beauman, 'Forster, Edward Morgan (1879–1970)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online (accessed 17 December 2018). Examples of the studies include Michelle Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm: Music and the World in E. M. Forster* (University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Chicago and Springfield, 2010); Tsung-Han Tsai, 'Hearing Forster: E.M. Forster and the politics of music' (Ph.D. thesis, St. Andrews University, 2013). See also Kramer, *Musical Meaning*.

²¹⁴ Dennis Farr, 'Wilenski, Reginald Howard (1887–1975)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online (accessed 17 December 2018).

²¹⁵ Edmund Blunden, 'Nichols, Robert Malise Bowyer (1883–1944)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online (accessed 17 December 2018).

²¹⁶ Gerald Abraham, 'Calvocoressi, Michel-Dimitri', *Grove Music Online* (accessed 17 December 2018).

the struggle of describing listening experiences, the influence of the rising tension in Europe, the notion of music as powerful influence over the emotions, how different music was valued, and the importance of familiarity with repertoire. Most importantly, they highlight the different, individual nature of listening and engagement within a broader cultural perspective that favoured musically informed attentiveness. The first article, by author E.M. Forster, eloquently begins 'Listening to music is such a muddle that one scarcely knows how to start describing it.'²¹⁷ This sentiment highlights an important theme through this thesis: the complexity of writing about listening and experience.

The European conflict is mentioned in two of the articles, by Forster and P. de Lande Long. For Forster, it was one of many 'obvious' visual, aural or internal distractions that prompted 'wool-gathering'. He provided an entertaining list that encompassed 'the soprano's chin', 'the antics of the conductor', 'the affectation of the pianist', and 'the extreme physical ugliness of the audience'.²¹⁸

I fly off every minute: after a bar or two I think how musical I am, or of something smart I might have said in conversation; or I wonder what the composer – dead a couple of centuries – can be feeling as the flames on the altar still flicker up; or how soon an H.E. bomb would extinguish them.²¹⁹

Kramer argues that Forster privileged attentive, structural listening as an ideal mode that brought 'pleasure approaching bliss', and was superior to this non-ideal associative mode of experience.²²⁰ However, these evocative descriptions suggest that in reality Forster was drawn to 'wool-gathering', and that his listening habits were much like the heteronomous, 'wavering' multi-modal focus described by Szendy and Herbert, involving performative sense-making.²²¹ In contrast, both Forster and de Lande Long describe music as transformative, and spiritually significant in light of the crisis in Europe, lending their listening meaning and 'urgency'.²²² Forster argued that music 'seems to be more "real" than anything, and to survive when the rest of civilisation decays. I am always thinking of it with relief. It can never be ruined or nationalized'.²²³ For de Lande Long, the crisis made it 'more than ordinarily difficult to concentrate on music', yet he describes how the experience of Brahms' Fourth Symphony gave him a 'gift' – it 'displaced my anxiety and gave me

²¹⁷ Forster, 'How I Listen to Music-I'.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ Kramer, *Musical Meaning*, 162. That Forster had deep understanding of the individual and interpretative nature of listening is also evidenced by his famous descriptions of listening in the novel *Howard's End* (1910).

²²¹ His listening has a striking correlation with Vernon Lee's concept of listening as 'homogenous contemplation', in which moments of concentrated active attention intersected with thoughts, memories, associations, emotional states. Described in Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening'.

²²² See Kramer, *Musical Meaning*, 161. He describes this thinking as 'as wishful as it is relieving'.

²²³ Forster, 'How I Listen to Music-I'.

comfort'.²²⁴ This attribution of ideological musical value in wartime is discussed further below and within the following chapters with respect to notions of escapism, transcendence and the differences between ordinary and special experiences.

Several of the articles suggest a common belief that music 'worked' on the listener, effecting a loss of control through deep multi-modal engagement.²²⁵ In particular, art critic R.H. Wilenski was fearful of the effects of music and visual spectacle upon his intellect, which suggests a strict extension of the intellectual attributes of the model of attentive, serious listening above.

Nowadays, when I listen to music, which happens rarely, I listen to gramophone records or the Radio, and I keep my mind very sharply focused on the insidious noises as upon a crafty or threatening antagonist who is out to soothe, irritate or assault my nerves and senses and deprive my will and intellect of their control.²²⁶

The articles and letter that followed demonstrate that Wilenski's perspective was not one commonly shared, as the other listeners valued the emotional engagement that musical offered them, and viewed intellectual and emotional appreciation equally.²²⁷ Music critic M.D. Calvocoressi, for example, believed that 'the intellect should do its work subconsciously', and thus 'My intellect is more or less trained to take a back seat while I listen, so as to allow my imagination free play'.²²⁸ He described this as 'sensuous' listening. Appreciation and engagement are discussed further in Chapter 3, and Calvocoressi's article is analysed in Chapter 5 as an example of a professional critic's listening. However, a contrasting perspective is provided by poet Robert Nichols' article, which also provides an interesting comparison with the idealised model proposed by the BBC. Nichols strove to achieve a 'gathering of the being' he called 'recollection', which he felt was necessary for 'real listening' and 'to experience anything at all great', and which either occurred naturally or by 'an act of will'.²²⁹ He wrote

First I settle down and make myself as comfortable as I can. It is important for my neighbour that I should do this because I am then less likely to give way to nervous twitching, etc., when the music works on me. [...] Should this 'recollection' become—as often happens—intermittent, I close my eyes and/or shade them with my hand.

²²⁴ P. de Lande Long, 'How I Listen to Music—III'.

²²⁵ Frith similarly describes listening as an activity involving a surrender of control that has to be actively prepared for. Frith, 'More Than Meets the Ear'.

²²⁶ Wilenski, 'How I Listen to Music—I'.

²²⁷ Stubbings, 'How I Listen to Music'; Nichols, 'How I Listen to Music—IV'; Calvocoressi, 'How I Listen to Music—V'.

²²⁸ Calvocoressi, 'How I Listen to Music—V'.

²²⁹ Robert Nichols, 'How I Listen to Music—IV'.

Importantly, Nichols's desire for this deeply engaged listening state also enabled him to listen in a very different, multi-sensory mode in the domestic environment:

At home, when alone, and listening to gramophone or radio I dim the illumination and do what I like—which ranges from sitting sunk as above to dancing in a pair of shorts. Absurd? I think not. Nobody sees me, and, so doing, I find I can enter more fully into certain music—for instance, Beethoven's Seventh Symphony.²³⁰

The articles demonstrate the individual idiosyncrasy of listening habits and attitudes, explored further across this thesis, that were constrained within cultural conventions that privileged attentiveness and serious music. Hennion makes a similar point, arguing that as individuals emphasise their unconventionality, they simultaneously mirror thousands of other music lovers.²³¹ This thesis uses this mix of communality and individuality to explore the differences and similarities within the concerns of listeners in wartime.

2.3. Mediation

As the preceding sections demonstrate, musical experiences were mediated in a number of ways, by their environments and media, educative ideals, and listeners' attitudes and behaviours. This thesis argues that, in particular, the cultural and historical conditions of listening, the potential for self-awareness within the experience, and the act of documenting it in writing combined to make self-identity a prominent concern for the listeners studied. That musical media, in particular technology, have an important role in shaping and mediating listening experiences has been acknowledged by several scholars.²³² Musical media, from concerts to broadcasting, transformed the musical experience and act of listening.²³³ Moreover, each medium had a clearly defined social status within the landscape of 1930s music-making, providing listeners with standards of experience and cultural values against which other experiences could be judged.

As discussed in the following chapters, an important part of the mediation of listening experiences was the construction of different identities it prompted for listeners, within different taste groups, communities and cultures. This notion is discussed by several scholars, with respect to historical cultural conditions and social expectations of listening,²³⁴ as well as music's role as a resource for self-regulation, the construction of self-identity, and 'emotional work'.²³⁵ From a different perspective, scholars have discussed the negotiation of public and private identities,

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ Hennion, 'Music Lovers', 6.

²³² Born, 'Listening, Mediation, Event'; Cressman, 'Listening, Attentive Listening, and Musical Meaning'; Hennion, 'Music Lovers'.

²³³ Hennion, 'Music Lovers', 12.

²³⁴ Frith, 'More Than Meets the Ear'.

²³⁵ Herbert discusses this as Tia DeNora's view. Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening'.

with particular relevance to diary and letter-writing.²³⁶ Cook and Botstein also discuss the difference between experiencing music and writing, and how it is shaped by the culturally acceptable language of the historical moment.²³⁷ This is discussed further across the thesis, particularly in Chapter 5. Writing about musical experiences was mediated by the purpose and function of the text, (whether professional or private), its potential audience, and by listeners' multiple overlapping identities within the musical and social communities to which they belonged. In wartime, the environment for musical experiences also included expectations and fears about the war, and cultural ideologies about music (discussed below).

3. The influence of the Second World War

The third part of this chapter presents the effects of the Second World War upon music-making. It highlights the main events and periods that had physical effects on musical provision and accompanying policies that affected the public's opportunities to experience music. It also introduces the ideological mythologies that developed surrounding the use, taste for, and experience of music during wartime. As such, it explores how the problems of genre, style and listening acquired new significance during the war. These themes are then discussed throughout the following chapters.

Ehrlich has argued that the Second World War 'is commonly depicted as a decisive "point of change" for music and musicians in Britain', an initial disruption followed by a 'boom' in leisure that 'stimulated "phenomenal demand for all kinds of music enterprise", in traditional centres and scattered camps'.²³⁸ Many historians since have argued for a more nuanced narrative that highlights the resurgence of old grievances, disputes, and ideological aims under the new circumstances of war. As the following chapters argue, World War Two, often dramatically, changed the context for listeners' musical experiences, but it was also a period of considerable continuity as listeners sought a normality reconfigured under new circumstances.

Total war caused changes to social structure and cohesion across Britain as large portions of the population moved around; to the material conditions, availability and quality of musical leisure activities; and often, therefore, the musical habits and customs of the general public.²³⁹ There were small- and large-scale, temporary and long-term changes to the fabric of the music industry

²³⁶ For example, James Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives: Mass Observation and the Making of the Modern Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), and Margaretta Jolly, *Everyday Letters and Literary Form: Correspondence from the Second World War*, (Ph.D. thesis., University of Sussex, 1997).

²³⁷ Nicholas Cook, *Music, Imagination, and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 1; Botstein, 'Listening through Reading', 130; 'Toward a History of Listening', 429.

²³⁸ Ehrlich, *The Music Profession*, 223–4.

²³⁹ The term 'material' has been used in this thesis to provide a contrast to the term 'physical', in order to convey a better sense of the tangible effects of war that encompass more than physical damage or change, such as changes to the wider environment of leisure activities as well as income, dislocation and lifestyle.

and the musical experience. There were disruptions to musical provision, new performance environments and practices, and, for the BBC, an important re-conception of who listeners were and how they listened (see Chapter 2). However, older concerns such as song-plugging, Americanisation, and the public's taste for high culture were also prominent parts of the wartime narrative, given new significance and purpose.²⁴⁰ Considerably more scholarly attention has been given to the important, far-reaching shifts, particularly with regard to the unintended post-war consequences of 'emergency measures' such as BBC's Forces Programme and Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA).²⁴¹ Histories of prominent musical institutions illuminate the economic and political struggles that many faced just to survive the duration of the war.²⁴² The tangible effect of smaller, temporary austerity measures upon musical experiences are less well-documented, for example, the effects of paper shortages (see Chapter 3).

3.1. Physical effects

There were a number of important phases and events during the Second World War that had a tangible effect upon the musical life of Britain. As mentioned above, these phases began with the 'preamble' of rising tension, in which many emergency policies were put in place, before the outbreak of war on 3 September 1939. For the musical industries and their audiences, the following eight months of 'phoney war' were marked by an immediate disruption of music-making, and a gradual re-establishment of cultural practice under new austerity circumstances. This was followed by the 'first perception of real war, beginning with the advent of Winston Churchill and ending with the Battle of Britain' and the Blitz, which began in earnest on 7 September 1940 and lasted until 11 May 1941.²⁴³ Mid-1941 to 1944 was a 'long haul' of tired facilities and a lack of goods for the home front, in which Zeigler argues the progress of the war was defined by events in the global arena.²⁴⁴ However, from 1942 the British public was brought into 'unprecedented contact' with American soldiers and culture, and by May 1944 their presence in the UK had grown to more than 1.67 million.²⁴⁵ From 1944, the home front was once again the stage for warfare, with the 'Little Blitz' between 21 January and 29 May, build up to D-Day on 6

²⁴⁰ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*; Guthrie, 'Review Article: Soundtracks to the People's War'.

²⁴¹ For example, Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*, 90–93; Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 60–81; Rose, *Which People's War*; Nicholas, *The Echo of War*; 'The People's Radio'; Jörn Weingärtner, *The Arts as a Weapon of War: Britain and the Shaping of National Morale in the Second World War* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006).

²⁴² For example, Doctor and Wright, *The Proms: A New History*; Kenyon, *The BBC Symphony Orchestra*; Richard Morrison, *Orchestra: The LSO: A Century of Triumph and Turbulence* (London: Faber & Faber, 2004); F.M. Leventhal, "'The Best for the Most': Cema and State Sponsorship of the Arts in Wartime, 1939–1945', *20th-Century British History* 1, no. 3 (1990); Weingärtner, *The Arts as a Weapon of War*. See also several chapters in Nick Hayes and Jeff Hill, eds., *'Millions Like Us?': British Culture in the Second World War* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999).

²⁴³ Zeigler, *London at War*, 179.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 179.

²⁴⁵ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 177.

June, and V-weapons attack that lasted from 13 June 1944 to 27 March 1945, before peace was finally achieved in Europe on 8 May. A number of these events are referred to throughout the thesis.

The first impact of war upon music-making forms an evocative starting point of almost every history of wartime entertainment. Upon the outbreak of war, the Government closed all venues of public entertainment in the anticipation of immediate devastating air-raids.²⁴⁶ 'Everything in the entertainment business came to a complete stop. It was a complete and abrupt blackout for bands playing in hotels, cinemas, theatres and music-halls'.²⁴⁷ With the hindsight of knowing that musical life soon revived, it is difficult to understand the impact this had. Musicians faced a complete cessation of employment. Music-lovers' primary source of entertainment, excepting gramophone records and domestic music-making, was the BBC's 'dispiriting' provision of gramophone records and Sandy MacPherson playing theatre organ music.²⁴⁸ Contemporary sources give examples of the range of emotions this caused. One MO diarist wrote: 'No cinemas. No decent wireless programmes. No lights. No raids. BOREDOM!'²⁴⁹ An MO report on dancing argued that 'the immediate impact of war was collapse. It was not only a collapse due to the closing of dance-halls, but also a mental hopelessness and the utter disappearance of anything like a future.'²⁵⁰ It also reported 'chaos and almost universal despair among band leaders and the rank and file of musicians.'²⁵¹

After public outcry, the Government relaxed its ban in September, with dance halls and cinemas re-opening quickly across the nation,²⁵² followed by concerts in London at the end of the month.²⁵³ The literature suggests that this action was met with a surge of interest in musical leisure habits, and 'booms' of attendance at dances and cinemas.²⁵⁴ Other, less mainstream musical endeavours opened their doors again too, as an MO diarist describes: 'My folk dance club at Morley College re-opens this afternoon. There is a large crowd there, and they seem to be bubbling over with high spirits as they dance. Evidently the re-opening fulfils a real need.'²⁵⁵ The BBC, already assured of the prominent role it would have in the life of wartime Britain, evacuated

²⁴⁶ For example, see Silvey, *Who's Listening?*, 87–8; Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*, 88–9; Zeigler, *London at War*, 40.

²⁴⁷ MO FR11A, 'Jazz and Dancing', November 1939, 15.

²⁴⁸ Nicholas reports that in the first fortnight of war, the BBC broadcast 'some ten hours of recorded music a day' and 'a total of forty-five programmes' by MacPherson. Nicholas, *The Echo of War*, 27.

²⁴⁹ Christopher Tomlin, 05/09/39, quoted in Garfield, *We Are at War*, 32–3.

²⁵⁰ MO FR11A, 4.

²⁵¹ MO FR11A, 14.

²⁵² Nott, *Music for the People*.

²⁵³ See Introduction and Chapter 3.

²⁵⁴ For example, see Nott, *Going to the Palais*; McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*.

²⁵⁵ Eileen Potter, 30/09/39, quoted in Garfield, *We Are at War*, 42.

its staff and several departments from London, 'to maintain its essential services' in the event of air-raids or invasion (see Chapter 2), and dramatically condensed its ensembles.²⁵⁶

The widespread conscription of musicians devastated the ranks of the top orchestras and dance bands. For example, the RAF recruited many top musicians into its Symphony Orchestra and 'Squadronaires' Dance Orchestra, which achieved widespread acclaim.²⁵⁷ Uniformed musicians form a recurring thread throughout this thesis, with specific reference to the quality of ensembles and performances. Many ensembles and festivals were unable to survive, and shut down for the duration of World War Two, among them prominent organisations and landmarks in the annual diary of the serious music lover (see Chapter 3). Covent Garden opera house was converted into a Mecca dance hall for the duration of the war where '25,000 people a week' danced, and was only re-leased for opera in 1946.²⁵⁸

The blackout, curfews and reduced means of transport combined to reshape the nature of evening leisure activities.²⁵⁹ MO conducted a national panel on the blackout that suggested an immediate decrease in leisure activity: cinema-going decreased by twenty percent with men and seventeen percent with women, although visiting dance halls only decreased by two percent with men and six percent with women.²⁶⁰ A curfew enforced earlier closing times on venues, including dance halls, cinemas, theatres and concert halls,²⁶¹ whilst transport difficulties meant leisure was more often taken closer to home. Moreover, these restrictions often affected the atmosphere, audience behaviour and musical content, as the following chapters explore. Lunchtime concerts, in particular the new National Gallery concerts, began to dominate serious music culture in London, and weekend concerts were regularly moved to afternoons (see Chapter 3). The blackout and curfews had a prominent effect on the dance hall industry, increasing sociability and altering the predominant skill level of dancers.²⁶² According to MO, an interesting effect was an initial decline in the popularity of the waltz, which it attributed to the expectation of air-raid alarms and panic, and the effect of the blackout on lighting: 'Pre-war, when the band played a waltz the lights went low, often just to a pale glimmer of blue'; now this was frequently not practised as dancers 'don't want any more blackout; turning down the lights may lead to loud raspberries.'²⁶³

The Second World War also prompted various restructures and different modes of music-making. The BBC restructured its services several times during the war (see Chapter 2) in an effort to cater

²⁵⁶ Kenyon, *The BBC Symphony Orchestra*, 155; Silvey, *Who's Listening?*, 87.

²⁵⁷ Ian Kendrick, *More Music in the Air: The Story of Music in the Royal Air Force* (Middlesex: RAF Music Services, 2011), 40–5. See also Chapter 3.

²⁵⁸ See Guthrie, 'Music and Cultural Values in 1940s Britain'; Zeigler, *London at War*, 321.

²⁵⁹ See MO FR11A; Zeigler, *London at War*, 130–2.

²⁶⁰ MO FR11A, 1.

²⁶¹ Ehrlich reports a 6pm curfew. Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*, 88.

²⁶² MO FR11A, 5.

²⁶³ MO FR11A, 8.

to the needs and morale of servicemen, war-workers and civilians. Two state-sponsored initiatives both sought to 'provide sufficient entertainment to sustain the morale of the civilian population' during the 'emergency', and brought music to displaced civilians and servicemen across the country, particularly in rural areas, and at front lines of the war.²⁶⁴ The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) was established in December 1939 as an emergency measure to 'preserve and promote cultural activities in wartime' in music, drama and art.²⁶⁵ The Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) was quickly resuscitated after service in the First World War, primarily to provide entertainment for the troops.²⁶⁶ The two organisations had a growing rivalry, exacerbated by cross-overs in their provision.²⁶⁷

CEMA and ENSA both provided factory concerts, usually of familiar light and popular music, of varying quality,²⁶⁸ performed by small 'concert parties' ranging from pianists and soloists to string quartets.²⁶⁹ For periods of World War Two, both institutions also offered concerts of orchestral 'popular classics'; both also toured their artists, including celebrities, around the front lines to perform to British troops. At its peak in 1944, CEMA provided 3,169 factory and 371 hostel concerts, within 6,140 total performances.²⁷⁰ CEMA officials acknowledged that these audiences "provided a uniquely captive market for their product (or any mobile entertainment)", due to geographical dislocation, long hours, transport shortages and a lack of alternative leisure.²⁷¹ CEMA also initially sought to support amateur music-making; and sponsored regional tours by displaced professional ensembles, including Sadler's Wells Opera, the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) and the Hallé Orchestra.

The Blitz brought well-documented, widespread devastation across Britain and affected leisure habits as cinemas and dance-halls were hit, concert series cancelled (see Chapter 3), and travel became more dangerous. The destruction of notable musical landmarks in London has received regular mention in the literature because of their cultural importance or 'celebrity' status. For example, on 8 October 1940, a bomb hit the BBC's Broadcasting House, destroying much of its music library, and exploding during the 9 o'clock news. On 8 March 1941, a fashionable London

²⁶⁴ Leventhal, "'The Best for the Most'", 290, 292–5.

²⁶⁵ Hayes, 'More Than "Music-While-You-Eat"?'. The state sponsorship and changing policies and function of CEMA throughout the Second World War, and its role in the post-war establishment of the Arts Council are well-documented by several scholars. See Leventhal, "'The Best for the Most'"; Hayes, 'More Than "Music-While-You-Eat"?'; Weingärtner, *The Arts as a Weapon of War*; Guthrie, 'Music and Cultural Values in 1940s Britain'.

²⁶⁶ Leventhal, "'The Best for the Most'", 290; Hayes, 'An "English War"', 4.

²⁶⁷ See 'More Than "Music-While-You-Eat"?'.
²⁶⁸ ENSA was repeatedly criticised by both audiences and critics for catering to the lowest tastes and for the low standards and vulgarity of its performances, usually familiar variety shows and singing, nicknamed 'Ensatainments'. This was likely the result of the shortage of professional talent and 'far-reaching scale' of its commitment. Leventhal, "'The Best for the Most'", 219, 299.

²⁶⁹ Hayes, 'More Than "Music-While-You-Eat"?', 231.
²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 223.
²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 214.

nightclub, the Café du Paris, was destroyed in an air-raid, killing the bandleader Ken 'Snakehips' Johnson and many others. Zeigler suggests that it was the 'instant transition' from luxury, gaiety, and apparent safety to 'shocking destruction' which caught the popular imagination and attention of the press.²⁷² On 10 May 1941 an intensive air-raid destroyed the Queen's Hall, London's foremost concert venue, and 'with it all the double basses, violins, oboes and harps of the London Philharmonic Orchestra'.²⁷³ Somehow the orchestra found replacements and another hall, and performed the following afternoon; in June, large orchestral concerts were moved to the Royal Albert Hall (RAH) for the 1941 season of the Proms.²⁷⁴ In other cities, the Blitz caused a general, widespread depression to the culture industries. For example, one MO diarist wrote of the effect on his own leisure habits:

Sheffield has suffered much from the Blitz. Before then, I am told, it was one of the liveliest places you could wish to be in. Most places of entertainment close early (about 6), the shops close early, the cafes close early now. [...] Last night I discovered a dance-hall where they have dances every night. It was crowded out (99% civilians) but I enjoyed myself. Admission is 1/6d so I shan't be able to afford to go there often and buy meals as well. Reading will be my chief pastime, I think.²⁷⁵

The later periods of bombing brought similar changes to music-making, as discussed in Chapter 3. The flying V-weapon bombs were not restricted to night-time raids, and V2 weapons gave little warning of their arrival. Many public venues closed down where possible, and most of the public kept away, especially in London, but some still sought regular musical entertainment.²⁷⁶

As the war continued, there were other material effects. Paper shortages affected the availability of concert programmes, and repertoire became over-used (see Chapter 3). The visual spectacle of performances was reduced, particularly for opera, by the unavailability of new costumes and sets. Shortages of musical instruments and parts for gramophones and radios affected musicians and listeners. An MO diarist wrote in 1941 about her gramophone: 'now the gramophone is out of service. Charlie uses it for his dance records, despite there being something wrong with it. Charlie says that the gramophone needs to go to London for repairs and must wait till after the war. He evidently does not think this will be long'.²⁷⁷

²⁷² Zeigler, *London at War*, 147.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 147.

²⁷⁴ See Doctor, 'The Parataxis of "British Musical Modernism"'. The Proms seasons underwent many changes and disruptions, discussed in Chapter 3.

²⁷⁵ Edward Stebbing, 05/01/41, quoted in Garfield, *Private Battles*, 44.

²⁷⁶ See Edward Stebbing, 08/07/44, quoted in *Ibid.*, 438.

²⁷⁷ Pam Ashford, 05/08/41, quoted in *ibid.*, 146.

3.2. Ideologies about music in the Second World War

There are several important ideological ways in which the worth and function of music and listening were also affected by the Second World War. In particular, several 'myths' about music were widely perpetuated throughout the war. These were built upon similar ideals from preceding decades following the First World War, given new impetus by the political and social valuing of music during World War Two. These ideologies, largely promoting national unity and culture, survived within scholarship about the war, prompting a large body of revisionist histories that sought to discredit their contemporary authenticity by pointing to the fragmented nature of wartime society and experience.²⁷⁸ A contrasting perspective considers the veracity of these ideas not as broad cultural shifts, but as a collective perpetuation of myth-making. Zeigler wrote, with specific reference to the Blitz, that 'Londoners manufactured their own myth. It is striking how many spoke and wrote in clichés', and then acted them out.²⁷⁹ This idea is particularly interesting given the differences between sources studied in this thesis, and whether or not they engaged with music on an ideological level.

The manner in which music was ideologically framed in the Second World War was undoubtedly influenced by memories of the First World War and the expectations they created for the progression of another conflict. MacKay argues that the trauma of the First World War and the social and political developments of the 1930s had 'served to increase uncertainty about how the British people would behave in the event of another war'.²⁸⁰ To some extent therefore, the manner in which music (and leisure more broadly) was positioned as a tool for the war effort was central in ensuring the co-operation of the public. However, unlike the First World War, World War Two occurred in a new technological era that greatly shaped the course of its musical landscape, with particular regard to broadcasting and the controversies over popular music and audiences that recurred throughout the war (see Chapter 2). As examined in Chapter 4, a number of popular wartime songs from earlier conflicts regained their popularity as symbols of resistance and perseverance, part of the cultural everyday life of the war.²⁸¹ However, the song successes of the First World War created an expectation in the early months of war that patriotic, rousing songs would once again be popular, and to some extent can be seen as a root of the controversies to come over sentimental songs and Americanisation.

²⁷⁸ This is well discussed in Guthrie, 'Review Article: Soundtracks to the People's War'.

²⁷⁹ Zeigler, *London at War*, 163.

²⁸⁰ MacKay, *Half the Battle*, 17-19.

²⁸¹ See Les Cleveland, 'Singing Warriors: Popular Songs in Wartime', *Journal of Popular Culture* 28, no. 3, Winter (1994); Martin Page, ed. *Kiss Me Goodnight Sergeant Major: The Songs and Ballads of World War II* (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1973).

The relationship between popular and serious musical cultures was a significant source of tension, as both claimed ideological significance whilst the boundaries between them remained a prominent part of battles over musical quality (see Chapter 2). Popular music gained status during the Second World War, valued as an integral morale-building resource.²⁸² Music publishers strived and failed to find a formula for commercially successful wartime songs with mass popularity, as public tastes changed from war-themed to controversial sentimental songs (discussed further in Chapters 2 and 4).²⁸³ Wartime songs, in particular, were an important source of debate about national values, patriotism, masculinity and morale.

Serious music, meanwhile, also claimed centrality as a cultural resource, citing new audiences and greater appreciation amongst the public (see below). Guthrie describes the Second World War as a 'polemical space' for the contest between popular and serious music, reconfigured by the socio-economic demands of the war.²⁸⁴ However, she also argues that during the war the traditional opposition of popular and serious crumbled through the co-opted wartime functionality of all institutionalised music, and the prominence of 'middlebrow' music in wartime culture.²⁸⁵

The enduring myth of the Second World War is that it was a 'people's war'. This concept, perpetuated by the Ministry of Information from 1940, has an interesting relationship with attitudes towards music. It is commonly portrayed as nation-wide, cross-class consensus of British values against the common enemy: for example, that 'during the 1940's crisis the class-divided Britain of the 1930's gave way to a united national community in which rich and poor stood shoulder to shoulder against the Germans'.²⁸⁶ Thus the myth has a particular resonance within popular imagery of 'finest hour' moments. Moreover, it is a concept that retains ideological force in popular memorialisation of World War Two.²⁸⁷ Several scholars have suggested that it gained a collective authenticity during the war, as individuals began to consciously enact the values of unitedness, especially after the Blitz had arrived.²⁸⁸ It also has a complex narrative that positions varying accounts of 'the people' against those that opposed them, whether the enemy or the upper classes and high culture, as they fought to 'secure a socially equitable peace' of democracy, a 'better future' for all as epitomised by Bevin and Beveridge's wartime statements of socialism

²⁸² See Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 204–5.

²⁸³ The various song controversies of the Second World War are well-documented in contemporary reports and the literature. See MO file reports FR11A 'Jazz and Dancing'; FR49 'Gramophone Records', March 1940; and FR795 on songwriters, July 1941. See also Cleveland, 'Singing Warriors'; Baade, *Victory through Harmony*.

²⁸⁴ Kate Guthrie, 'Vera Lynn on Screen: Popular Music and the "People's War"', *Twentieth Century Music* 14, no. 2 (2017), 268. See also 'Review Article: Soundtracks to the People's War'.

²⁸⁵ 'Review Article: Soundtracks to the People's War', 331.

²⁸⁶ Harold L. Smith, *Britain in the Second World War: A Social History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 2.

²⁸⁷ See Noakes, *War and the British*.

²⁸⁸ For example, see Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*; Zeigler, *London at War*.

and populism.²⁸⁹ The idea of a people's war has particular interest for the ways that entertainment and culture were appropriated for political ends during World War Two, and the increasing attention paid to the identities and needs of listeners (see Chapter 2), and a 'new seriousness and curiosity among the listening public'.²⁹⁰

An important myth was that wartime changed the public's tastes in music for the better. Throughout the Second World War, cultural amelioration and a new audience for high culture were common battle-cries from egalitarian authorities. Proponents of the idea argued that 'we have realised as never before what music can mean in everyday life' and detected a 'renaissance' of musical culture, 'their cultural euphoria fed by images of rapt, uniformed audiences listening to Myra Hess in the National Gallery'.²⁹¹ CEMA's work bringing serious music to equally rapt audiences in factories was also widely used evidence.²⁹² However, there were also contemporary critics, who saw 'only an indiscriminating 'morass of musical inflation', with ceaseless repetition of a few hackneyed works', an idea with significance for Chapter 3.²⁹³ Nevertheless, it is the former that has widely survived within popular memorialisation of World War Two. An interesting assessment of this ideology is provided by a 1942 MO survey on the effects of the Second World War upon musical tastes. Although supportive of the existence of an increased appreciation for classical music, it suggests that this represented at best a small proportion of the public. It reported that fifty-eight percent of its sample had unchanged tastes, and that 'just under one in six consider that their musical taste have developed, or that their appreciation for music has increased because of the war'.²⁹⁴ Therefore, it concluded that 'the general picture is one of considerably increased appreciation and desire for music among a minority with majority tastes mainly unaltered'.²⁹⁵ Several recent scholars have questioned the legitimacy of the ideology's contemporary wartime veracity and continuation in subsequent scholarly literature.²⁹⁶ The following chapters consider whether, and when, it found voice in listeners' documented experiences.

²⁸⁹ Hayes, 'An "English War"', 4. John Baxendale, '"You and I – All of Us Ordinary People"'.
²⁹⁰ Calder, *The People's War*, 357.

²⁹¹ Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*, 89. Ehrlich quotes R.A. Butler, 'Message to the Performing Rights Society', 20 July 1944, in *PRS Emergency Bulletin*, Aug. 1944, 87.

²⁹² Calder, *The People's War*, 372–3.

²⁹³ Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*, 89. Ehrlich attributes this to conductor Boyd Neel.

²⁹⁴ MO FR1138, 'Music', March 1942, 1. The report notes that the sample was largely drawn from the 'middle and artisan' classes, and eleven percent 'never had any interest in music to speak of', although they considered this figure may have been higher. Notably, the term 'music' was largely considered not to include jazz. 'One in ten' reported an increased intolerance for dance music, which was also considered a sign of good taste (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of contrasting views on 'good' taste and dance music).

²⁹⁵ MO FR1138, 1.

²⁹⁶ Hayes, 'More Than "Music-While-You-Eat"?' This literature includes, for example, Calder, *The People's War*, 357, 372–3; Zeigler, *London at War*, 50–51.

This myth has a significant link with the notion of escapism from the wartime circumstances of uncertainty, fear and austerity. Narratives of escapism find voice in much of the literature about wartime leisure, particularly regarding cinema-going and dance. As social activities in relatively luxurious venues, they enabled listeners to physically 'escape' their daily wartime lives and lodgings into comfortable environments;²⁹⁷ the cinema also offered an additional element of imaginative escape into the film (see Chapter 4). Experiences of serious music were often framed as a different, more ideological escape that enabled listeners to transcend the violence and uncertainty of war, as de Lande Long demonstrates above. Moreover, this opportunity for transcendence closely relates to contemporary notions of musical engagement as transformative, to which the listener surrendered themselves and became 'mobilised for experience [...] in a state of becoming'.²⁹⁸ Chapter 5 examines this concept further, in relation to unusual wartime events, and argues that the Second World War added an impetus for listeners to experience such events collectively and transcendentally.

However, it is notable that the transformative power of serious music was a phenomenon beyond the ideological, and shaped real (and private) experiences and attitudes towards music, as two MO diarists demonstrate. Their writings suggest that these sentiments were valued, positively, beyond the confines of abstract discussion. For example:

It is eight. The BBC is just announcing that Myra Hess is to give a Beethoven programme.

8.30: it goes without saying that the diary halted for half an hour. Music soothes and encourages as nothing else can.²⁹⁹

The language used to describe the experience here, 'soothes and encourages', is remarkably similar to de Lande Long's attribution of comfort and displaced anxiety.³⁰⁰ Interestingly, a second diarist explicitly related this notion to the ideology about increased appreciation of serious music, in two separate entries written weeks apart in 1942. They demonstrate the tangible ability of a single experience to grant ideological certainty and identification, and a desire to participate in the myth-making previously considered unclear.

Picture Post today has an article on the increasing popularity of serious music (I noted my own greater interest in it only the other day). There must be some reason for this increase in the number of lovers of good music, but what it is is not apparent to me, unless it is that the better class of music is more inspiring and heartening in these troubled times.³⁰¹

²⁹⁷ Glancy, 'Picturegoer', 464, 470.

²⁹⁸ Nichols, 'How I Listen to Music–IV'. As also discussed by Wilenski, see above.

²⁹⁹ Pam Ashford, 26/08/41, quoted in Garfield, *Private Battles*, 154.

³⁰⁰ de Lande Long, 'How I Listen to Music–II'.

³⁰¹ Edward Stebbing, 15/07/42, quoted in Garfield, *Private Battles*, 267.

Went to the Promenade concert at the Albert Hall. How uplifting is the mighty surge of sound from a full symphony orchestra, v .at a tonic to a war-weary spirit. I feel sure this must be the reason for the ever-increasing popularity of orchestral music. Modern dance music can excite; it can never inspire or satisfy in the way that great classical music can.³⁰²

These themes are discussed further in the following chapters, with specific reference to distinctions between everyday and 'special' events; the valuing of different genres of music; and the immediacy between experiences, types of engagement, purposes of writing and the language listeners used to express their responses. In particular, Chapter 4 discusses the effect of emotional arousal upon listeners' habits of documenting experiences, and how this interacted with concepts of musical value.

A final point about the ideological effects of World War Two concerns political or patriotic programming of music, and the policies about the 'enemy' enacted throughout the war, a concern that specifically affected serious music and its culture. There were several ways in which music was used politically during the war, as part of a 'cultural front' that sought to strengthen the national war-effort, and weaken the enemy.³⁰³ This was part of a delicate balance that sought to encourage positive, conscious patriotism and participation from the public with notions of Britishness, whilst avoiding the strident jingoism and anti-German sentiment that had dominated during the First World War.³⁰⁴ Music from Allied cultures (especially representatively 'national' music), was increasingly programmed at concerts and on the radio as the Second World War progressed, in order to respect and support their causes, morally and financially (see Chapter 3).³⁰⁵ Russian culture was extensively popular amongst the public, which encompassed a 'craze' for its music. Numerous official commissions for propaganda music for film and broadcast were given to prominent British composers, such as Vaughan Williams and Ireland.³⁰⁶

In contrast, 'enemy' music had to be carefully handled. As MacKay suggests, 'modern war demands that the enemy be seen as the standard-bearer of barbarism' and thus his culture tainted.³⁰⁷ However, the established canon of serious musical culture was founded upon master-composers of Germanic and Italian origin, and had widespread popularity.³⁰⁸ As such, within the opening months of war, simultaneously there was public acceptance and demand for core

³⁰² Edward Stebbing, 01/08/42, quoted in *ibid.*, 273.

³⁰³ MacKay, 'Being Beastly to the Germans', 513.

³⁰⁴ Miles Taylor, 'Patriotism, History and the Left in Twentieth-Century Britain', *The Historical Journal* 33, no. 4 (1990), 980; Zeigler, *London at War*, 85.

³⁰⁵ For example, see Dee, 'Music and Propaganda'; Claire Launchbury, *Music, Poetry, Propaganda: Constructing French Cultural Soundscapes at the BBC During the Second World War* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012); Morris, 'Battle for Music'.

³⁰⁶ See Guthrie, 'Music and Cultural Values in 1940s Britain'; Morris, 'Battle for Music'.

³⁰⁷ MacKay, 'Being Beastly to the Germans', 513.

³⁰⁸ As Hughes points out with respect to 1930s 'crazes' for canonical composers Hughes, 'Popular Taste in Music', 93–8.

canonical composers, and a privately enacted ban against 'alien' composers, epitomised by a BBC policy. Morris describes the early acceptance of the core canon of classical masterworks as 'a major coup' for the British, and argues that its performance legitimised the claim of the free, civilised world to the 'international' traditions of European culture.³⁰⁹ Thus, in a further ideological statement, Britain and Allies were fighting to preserve this culture for the world, and classical music was granted new wartime functionality, and its survival further legitimised. As Chapters 3 and 5 explore, performances of music by Beethoven, already a dominant popular composer, increased significantly at populist concerts and achieved ideological significance. Moreover, the opening of his Fifth Symphony quickly became emblematic as an 'aural icon'³¹⁰ of the V for Victory campaign. In contrast, by July 1940 the BBC had created a complicated, formal blacklist for the exclusion of 'alien composers' through a racial filter that broke from their traditional purely artistic considerations, which endured throughout the Second World War with only minor modifications.³¹¹ The policy was glossed over publicly with an official explanation about music with copyright status and ensuing royalties owed to the enemy. Thus it was not a blanket ban, and credibly allowed for the continued performance of Bach, Beethoven, Rossini, and even (somewhat controversially) Wagner on aesthetic and populist grounds.³¹² Nevertheless, as explored in the following chapters, numerous practical problems arose that aroused the patriotism of some listeners, yet disappointed others.

Summary

This chapter has shown the vast variety of musical media, environments and genres available to the listening public in the late 1930s and 1940s. By illustrating this kaleidoscopic whole, questions of difference and similarities between musical experiences and listening behaviours have been examined. This chapter has introduced the themes that the following discussions will explore: popular and niche tastes, the judgement of musical value and quality, listeners' identities within communities and audiences, the mediation of experiences by venues, media and cultural attitudes, and the ideologies that shaped public discourse about World War Two. The following chapters question the extent to which listeners discussed and understood these notions and definitions, and examine the relationship of their experiences to the change, controversies, continuity and ideology of wartime music-making.

³⁰⁹ Morris, 'Battle for Music', 189–90. Morris also discusses the use of German music in live performance, broadcast and film contexts.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

³¹¹ MacKay, 'Being Beastly to the Germans', 513–4.

³¹² 'Leaving out the Black Notes', 75. MacKay's articles give in detail the various composers that were banned throughout World War Two.

Chapter 2: Listening to music on the wireless

Dear Sir,

I am addicted to the music of Dvorak, and take an extravagant delight in his chamber music on Sunday nights. If anything that one listener says weighs in the balance, I do beg of you to carry on the good work – or even repeat the whole series, one hearing is not sufficient for my poor musical appreciation.

But, anyway, thanks!

Sincerely,

(C.H. Salter)³¹³

In two brief sentences, Salter's letter to the BBC encapsulates many of the nuances, debates and issues concerning musical broadcasting and listening experiences that came into sharp relief during the Second World War, in particular the difficult balance of accommodating the public's various musical tastes. The letter also demonstrates several elements pertinent to an understanding of Salter as a listener. For example, his unrestrained enthusiasm for chamber music, a 'highbrow' genre, alongside his acknowledgement of a poor ability for 'musical appreciation' suggests a particular status within an understood hierarchy of musical tastes and types of listening. Combined with passionate language ('addicted', 'extravagant', 'beg') and careful self-positioning as 'one listener' amongst the nationwide audience, these elements provide a framework for his request that recurs across the body of letters examined here. Moreover, Salter demonstrates that the unique medium of radio was a significant element in his listening expectations, as it balanced the possibility of repeat hearings and regular series of specific repertoire with mixed programming that catered to all tastes and genres.

That radio connected to people on a personal, human level is evident from Salter's letter. Yet, as he acknowledged, he was just one listener within the national audience of thirty-four to thirty-five million listeners,³¹⁴ trying to get his musical wishes heard in an era of rapid social, political and programming changes. Additionally, for the BBC the demands of wartime morale gave increasing

³¹³ Letter from C.H. Salter, undated, stamped 19/07/45, R41/114/3.

³¹⁴ See Chapter 1.

power to the preferences of the majority, as discussed below. Did one listener 'weigh in the balance'?

This chapter explores this question by examining what listeners thought of their wartime experiences of the radio and their relationship with the organisation that monopolised it, the BBC. It is divided into two sections, examining first the wartime audience for the BBC and second the effect upon listening of the changes made by the BBC during wartime. The first section questions the type of listeners who wrote to the BBC and examines the surviving archived letters. It also examines the nature of the radio listening experience and the contrasting kinds of listening and listeners idealised and legitimised by the BBC. The second section examines how individual listeners reacted to periods of change and musical controversy during the Second World War and questions how the experience of broadcast music was altered by the innovations, curtailments and bans the BBC enacted. This section also discusses nationalism that arose within different wartime contexts of radio music. Letters from listeners are analysed with reference to five themes: the musical values and tastes they exhibit; the effect of the temporal framework of an experience; the negotiations of self and community that they display; the wider function of broadcast music within listeners' lives; and their political and ideological relationship with notions of musical value and quality.

A recurring feature of these two sections is the far-reaching implications of the BBC's innovative Forces Programme, which was created 'to serve British troops and to provide a light alternative for home listeners'.³¹⁵ The inauguration of the Forces Programme on 7 January 1940 was a significant event in the history of wartime music and listening for four reasons: it re-defined the nature of the radio listening experience, it changed the BBC's perception of who its listeners were, and of how and where they listened, and gave popular taste in broadcast music a new ideological importance. As explored below, there was a fundamental mismatch in the 1930s between the way the BBC perceived its audience and what it actually was. The Forces Programme acknowledged a new special audience (male soldiers), legitimised the use of the radio for background listening, and used popular dance music to serve a new priority, morale.³¹⁶ Listening moved from the domestic sphere into workplace and military environments, and accompanied an increasing awareness within the BBC of the different demographics of its audience, including housewives, who used the wireless in different ways.

³¹⁵ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 11.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

1. The wartime audience for the BBC

1.1. The postbag and Listener Research

From its beginnings, the BBC was 'inundated' with letters from its listeners, the phenomenon of 'people volunteering their views to those whom they regard as in a position to do something about it'.³¹⁷ These letters were so varied and 'manifestly authentic' that they were initially considered an adequate guide to listener opinion, until it was recognised that they had prominent biases: that the 'overwhelming majority came from middle-class writers', that some issues provoked far more letters, and that some listeners wrote frequently and others not at all.³¹⁸ During the 1920s and 1930s, letters provided the only real information known about the identities and tastes of listeners. Some BBC officials regarded the letters as significant and others dismissed them.

In 1936, the BBC established a Listener Research department to systematically monitor the quantity of listening to individual programmes, their popularity, and reactions in public opinion to changes in policy. Information was gathered through different methods of sampling public opinion similar to those used by MO: daily surveys, panels of listeners, and correspondents.³¹⁹ Data gathered from daily interviews of 800 listeners formed the 'Listening Barometer', which recorded the percentage of the public who had listened to specific broadcasts. Correspondents and voluntary panellists completed questionnaires on various aspects of broadcast programmes.³²⁰ As such, listeners largely became faceless in the pursuit of peak programme times and listening habits. However, Listener Research was an important part of the BBC's increasing understanding of its listeners' tastes and habits.³²¹ The department's status grew tenfold during the Second World War, as its scope was expanded to investigate how the war affected these habits across listeners of different economic status, specifically during waking, mealtime and bedtime hours.³²²

Letters from listeners remained the primary source of voluntary, unsolicited individual opinion for the BBC throughout the 1930s and 1940s, and the corporation continued to receive thousands of letters per week from those who wanted their voices and tastes to be heard. The BBC actively welcomed praise, criticism and constructive suggestions in their annual yearbooks or

³¹⁷ Silvey, *Who's Listening?*, 28–9.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

³¹⁹ Dee, 'Music and Propaganda', 22–4. See also R. J. E. Silvey, 'Methods of Listener Research Employed by the British Broadcast Corporation', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 107 (1944).

³²⁰ Dee, 'Music and Propaganda', 22–4.

³²¹ See Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 376.

³²² *BBC Handbook 1940* (London: BBC), 76–9.

handbooks.³²³ In 1939, the BBC handled, circulated and replied individually to several hundred letters every day, of which they reported that 'about 75% are appreciative'.³²⁴ The 1940 *Handbook* explained to the public that the outbreak of war had significantly reduced the number of letters that received individual replies; however letters remained important as 'a specially useful guide to the listeners' requirements under changed conditions'.³²⁵ It also advised that every suggestion, criticism and appreciation was seen by a 'responsible official', and that 'points of special interest' were widely circulated, which is indeed evidenced by the surviving letters.

The letters have to be viewed primarily as 'expressions of the personal opinions of the writers', because it is impossible to judge whether any letter was representative of, or evidence for, similar or contrasting opinions of the majority of listeners who remained silent. As Robert Silvey, head of Listener Research, argued, 'letters often include the words "everyone agrees with me that ..." but this isn't evidence' of the size or nature of the larger opinion.³²⁶ As explored below, this tactic was an important tool for listeners who wished to persuade the BBC of the validity of their opinions. Moreover, as the 1932 *Year-Book* reported, the disadvantage of correspondence was 'that the most honest and sincere opinions can and do conflict with one another so radically.'³²⁷ The letters are a sample, or fragment of the whole audience, and despite the careful consideration they sometimes received, were not part of the BBC's listener research.

Crisell argues that the letters were written by a minority of 'untypically literate people with untypically strong views' within the audience.³²⁸ The BBC certainly considered that they were biased by factors that predisposed listeners to write, such as their class, literacy, loneliness, and any regular habit of documenting their lives. Moreover, Silvey hypothesised that only listeners who felt most strongly about a programme or issue wrote to the BBC, and he believed such responses to be the minority.³²⁹ This suggests an over-representation of those better-educated and with strong opinions in the letters, a hypothesis which is largely supported by the letters studied here, despite a considerable range of literacy and vocabulary used to describe the music.

The BBC preserved a tiny number of the letters received between 1936 and 1945 at their Written Archives Centre, Caversham (BBC WAC). Five files preserve the experiences and opinions of fifty-five listeners who wrote eighty-eight letters, along with a collection of BBC replies, memorandum

³²³ The BBC renamed these annual publications every few years, and as such between 1929 and 1947 five different titles were used (see Bibliography for full details).

³²⁴ *BBC Handbook 1939* (London: BBC), 86–7.

³²⁵ *BBC Handbook 1940*, 102.

³²⁶ Silvey, *Who's Listening?*, 29.

³²⁷ *The B.B.C. Year-Book 1932* (London: BBC), 105.

³²⁸ Crisell, *An Introductory History*, 40.

³²⁹ Silvey, *Who's Listening?*, 30–1.

and policy-documents relating to the topics raised.³³⁰ These letters were categorised by the BBC as either ‘serious’ or ‘popular’ music, reflecting the division of their music programming between the Music and Variety departments outlined in Chapter 1. Why were these particular letters kept? Firstly, they include complaints, requests, praise and condemnation on a number of the well-documented issues in the wartime narrative of the BBC and music: crooning, nationalism and enemy music, commercial competition, the question of ‘good’ music, and the increasing populism of BBC programming. None of these issues were new to the BBC in wartime, and all had a long history of debate and policy in the 1930s (see below). Secondly a large number were written by individuals in positions of significant social status, including several Lords and Ladies and a Lieutenant; thus comparatively few present the opinions of the middle or lower classes that made up the majority of the national audience.³³¹ Social status is discussed further as a prominent theme in this chapter. Thirdly, it is perhaps significant that 48 letters, over half of the preserved correspondence, were written by only 17 individuals.

Table 2.1 shows the distribution of letters by year and key recurring themes. As shown, an increasing number of letters survived from the latter years of the decade. The themes presented are all discussed below as integral parts of the wartime experience of wireless music; however, a few further initial observations can be made. Listeners who wrote appreciatively were predominantly those who made suggestions and requests.

Table 2.1: Distribution of letters written to the BBC, 1936–1945, by year and themes

Year	Number of letters	Theme	Number of letters
1936	2	Appreciation	20
1937	2	Commercial competition	5
1938	0	Crooning	8
1939	3	Disputes between genres	10
1940	1	Nationalism	10
1941	6	Quality of music	4
1942	6	Programming and policy	25
1943	15	Requests	13
1944	33	Tastes	5
1945	20		
Total:	88		

³³⁰ The files are listed in the Introduction and Bibliography. They also contain a number of letters unrelated to listening experiences, for example requests for music or information.

³³¹ See Silvey, *Who's Listening?*; Dee, 'Music and Propaganda'.

As can be seen, the highest number of letters discuss programming and policy, and the special nature of the radio listening experience. 'Nationalism' includes opinions on British and enemy music, National Anthems and refugee musicians, and 'Tastes' includes comments about the popularity and neglecting of specific genres, and the education of taste.

An important part of analysing the letters is to recognise the effect of this medium of self-expression in shaping how, and why, the listeners described their tastes and experiences. Each letter contains a large amount of information about the writer(s), whether individuals or groups, usually expressed through the desire to persuade the BBC to take a particular course of action. The following analyses compare the different ways that listeners attempted to persuade the BBC of their opinions, which ranged from appeals to the wider popularity of a musical taste and to cultural values the BBC was known to uphold, to the threat that it would lose its audience to 'enemy' radio stations and accusations of un-British behaviour. This chapter argues that these tools were intended to demonstrate that listeners were discerning, attentive and deeply invested in the broadcast music, and moreover that they were capable of and willing to exploit the political situation and their own social status if necessary, in the hope that they did 'weigh in the balance'. On the subject of the wartime policy, programming and function of the BBC, they also expose 'the differences of ideology, taste and experience that divided the nation'.³³² Nevertheless, and whether or not they were representative of the whole audience of thirty-four to thirty-five million listeners, the themes drawn out across the collection demonstrate a surprising coherence in their concerns, mannerisms and desires as listeners, and the frameworks within which they constructed them in their writing.

1.2 The nature of listening in

An important point to make, already alluded to in Chapter 1, is that the experience of listening to the radio was different from other kinds of musical experience, whether live or recorded. In contrast to live music, listening to the radio was for most listeners a solitary or family affair, as acknowledged by the 1940 *BBC Handbook*.³³³ From the mid-1930s, 'there was a renewed emphasis on the domestic context in which listening took place' which stressed 'the pleasures of privacy'.³³⁴ As a purely aural medium, radio featured none of the usual visual spectacle or distractions of live music (discussed in Chapter 3). Although it shared the domestic, private and intimate environment of the home with gramophone records, the content and shape of the experience was dictated by the programming and schedule of the BBC, not the desires of the listener. Moreover, the BBC broadcast both live and recorded programmes, either from the studio

³³² Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 196.

³³³ *BBC Handbook 1940*, 76–9.

³³⁴ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 374.

or as 'Outside Broadcasts' from locations across Britain. Broadcasts were also framed by announcements and mixed programming. As Chapter 1 suggests with reference to listening behaviours, this environment had a significant impact upon the practices and experiences of listening.

The BBC considered this listening environment and its features as a considerable benefit. Several early 1930s annual *Handbooks* extolled the benefits of a lack of distraction, and sought to advise listeners on how to 'acquire the habit of concentrated listening'.³³⁵ This feature was not repeated into the late 1930s, suggesting that, by then, the audience were expected to know how to listen. For example, a 1929 article on radio opera by Hamilton Fye discussed how the 'inconveniences' of listening to live opera (discomfort and distraction from the audience and performers) were removed by the broadcast medium. Fye concluded: 'Here I am in a comfortable chair, my dinner digested, my pipe within reach, my senses in just the right state of ease and anticipation to get full enjoyment out of music'.³³⁶

Some of the letters that deal most directly with specific listening experiences are notable for their discussion of the framework of programming, and how this affected their experiences of live broadcasts. This was a more prevalent feature when aspects of the temporal programme structure negatively impacted a listener's experience. In particular, the premature curtailment of live 'Outside Broadcasts' to allow for the prompt start of following programmes was the subject of heated complaint from classical music enthusiasts who missed the climactic last few minutes of concerts. Christopher Perkins's protest about a performance of Martin Shaw's *The Redeemer* emphasises how frustrating and detrimental listeners found the practice to their overall experience, by raising the notion of proper 'respect' for great music:

S[i]r Martin Shaw ranks next after S^r Vaughan Williams as a composer of that class of music, and this excellent performance of a very beautiful and important work on the composers 70th birthday should have been treated, I think, with greater respect, and allowed another minute or two instead of being cut to allow some unimportant talk³³⁷

This sentiment was also echoed in another letter,³³⁸ suggesting that an appropriate framework for a live broadcast, akin to the ideals and practices of the concert hall, was considered by listeners a cultural imperative.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 371.

³³⁶ *The B.B.C. Hand Book 1929* (London: BBC), 135, 140. This was, however, followed by a note stating that whilst the BBC agreed that 'many of the anomalies and absurdities' of stage opera were eliminated, and 'that invisibility is not necessarily a hindrance', the full value of opera was only realised by actual attendance.

³³⁷ Christopher Perkins, 10/03/45, R41/114/3.

³³⁸ Bertha M. Starling, 25/07/45, R41/114/3.

A similar complaint is found in four letters written by Lady Barbara Stephen, a self-professed 'Rural Music School' cultural educator. Stephen deplored the regular use of 'an injudicious choice of extracts' in her favourite early morning feature, 'This Week's Composer', a programme designed to encompass and introduce a composer's oeuvre. Her letters centre on the injustice done to classical music when pulled from its compositional context to form a 'pot pourri' of 'disjointed scraps':

It would be much more interesting & enjoyable if pieces were selected which could be played as a whole. This morning, for instance, the performance began with a scrap from a concerto, [leaving] off suddenly in the middle of a phrase: followed by isolated movements, chosen apparently at random, including two rondos in succession, of course from different concertos. The effect was, that much of the interest was lost.³³⁹

Stephen drew an analogy with poetry to make a point analogous to that of Perkins: that 'great' (that is, serious) music should be respectfully treated by the broadcast medium. She argued that the 'great composers' should not be treated this way, and entreated the BBC to choose one piece per composer, concluding with the notable remark that 'the result cannot be interesting either to highbrows or low brows'.³⁴⁰ She also invoked her own position as an educator, suggesting she sought to persuade the BBC by demonstrating she held similar pedagogical concerns to their own in considering the musical needs of other listeners.

A different relationship with the broadcast medium is presented by the letters of Sir (William) Alison Russell, a highbrow listener and connoisseur of high culture. The most prolific correspondent in the files, Russell wrote frequently to the BBC simply to express his appreciation of broadcast concerts and plays. His commentary, which blends constructive suggestions for announcements and performances, requests (notably for more Alban Berg and less Mozart, showing himself to be a true highbrow),³⁴¹ and reviews of individual performances, giving a sense of what the broadcasting listening experience was actually like for him. Russell is unique among the letter-writers, in that his reports bear a remarkable similarity in style and content to the documented experiences of live music, in particular the classical music discussed in Chapter 3. This is because he frequently reviewed the performances as opposed to the programming, and rarely mentioned the framework that accompanied wireless experiences. However, Russell's critiques are solely aurally based, in contrast to the aurally and visually influenced commentary written by Bradley (explored in Chapter 3). The most regular fixation of his fourteen letters was

³³⁹ Lady Stephen, 12/07/44, R41/114/2.

³⁴⁰ Lady Stephen, 01/08/44, R41/114/2.

³⁴¹ See the discussion of tastes in Chapter 1. Also Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 314.

how the abilities and interpretation of various BBC conductors affected both the quality of performance and his listening enjoyment. For example:

1. A lovely performance of the Messiah, at a measured pace, as befits the Master, but never dull, and tremendously exciting in the right places. The singing was all excellent, and [-]. Sargent conducting was [expert], we do not hear him often enough. [...]

3. A lovely performance of Cesar Franck's sonata for violin & piano. I don't know if he wrote another sonata. If he did I should like to hear it, or a repeat performance of this sonata, much more than Mozart's Sonata no. 98 (2). We get too much Mozart, I think – though they say some people enjoy him. I wonder if they do. [...]

5. I highly commend the practice of not ending the programme with crooners, but with sentimental sextets. And how delightful it was to hear rumba, with real singing. I suppose you must croon, but [the-] seem to get more & more miserable, though they have not much to say, thank God.³⁴²

These extracts give the striking impression that for Russell the broadcast experience occupied a curious space in-between attending to the music as if he were hearing it live, and attending to the framework of programming, its structure and the real possibility of repeat hearings. Perhaps in this way Russell embodied the attentive idealised listening recommended by the BBC. In contrast, Russell's experiences also suggest that the model of 'serious' music-centric listening discussed in Chapter 1 does not fully account for the nature of the broadcast listening experience. His fluidity of focus suggests that even within a primarily aural experience removed from the multi-sensory 'distractions' of live music, his attention was still homogenous, accounting for both musical and non-musical (programming) structures.

1.3. Conceptualising listeners and tastes

Many listeners, perhaps even most, had a clear concept of themselves as a listener: of where they stood culturally, socially and with respect to the output of the BBC. This clarity is an important part of the framework of the letters. As established in Chapter 1, during the 1930s the BBC privileged serious music as the pinnacle of its musical provision, and its 'universalisation' of musical culture led to a clear hierarchy of musical taste, that listeners both understood and frequently subscribed to.³⁴³ Scannell and Cardiff argue, for example, that a listener could define himself 'with perfect accuracy as "a lower middlebrow"' according to his favoured repertoire.³⁴⁴ For the listeners, the 'undifferentiated address' of broadcasting also enabled an awareness of

³⁴² Sir Alison Russell, 28/12/44, R41/114/2.

³⁴³ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 207.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 207.

other members of the nation as an 'imagined community' listening together in simultaneous experience, and thus a sense of their relationship to this whole.³⁴⁵ An important part of this awareness and understanding related to the quality of broadcast music, a recurring consideration in the letters, with respect to 'good' music and standards of style and performance. Moreover, as many of the letters demonstrate, listeners used the classification of 'taste publics'³⁴⁶ to identify and frame their personal preferences, often in reaction to the quality of opposing genres of music. For example, Mrs J.M. Reilly wrote

Thank you for the Mozart, Schubert & the other good music you have given us lately: but cannot we have more – much more?

Compared with all the noises you broadcast – the trumpity-trump music of dance bands & palm-court orchestras, the cinema organs, the jazz, "the music while you work" & workers' playtime, the crooners & so forth, the real music is as a grain of wheat to a bushel of chaff.

Don't you think that it is possible that you underestimate listeners' intelligences? Many people of very little education prefer Mozart to music hall tunes – but most weeks you are stingy with Mozart & Beethoven as if they cost a thousand times more to put on the air than "So & So & his band". [...]

There is such a wealth of glorious music to hear & it seems a woful [*sic.*] waste of time to broadcast all the trumpety rubbish that now afflicts our ears. My radio has to be turned off most of the time.³⁴⁷

The evocative, value-laden terminology Reilly uses to contrast between the various musical genres and styles is illuminating of the wider cultural knowledge of the listeners, which she attempted to convey despite a lack of musical literacy. Unlike other listeners, Reilly was helpfully specific about her tastes, and her use of the term 'noises' to disparage lesser musical culture demonstrates the implicit valuing (or devaluing) inherent in the cultural hierarchy discussed in Chapter 1. Her distinction between intelligence and education is also interesting because it does not align with the ideology of music appreciation education, by suggesting that an appreciation for (middlebrow) classical repertoire could be inherently shared by all.

Despite the nuanced views expressed in these letters, the BBC did not begin to develop such a subtle understanding of the listenership until it became necessary in the Second World War. During the 1930s the BBC held on to an idea of its audience as 'in essence, the English suburban

³⁴⁵ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 19.

³⁴⁶ See Chapter 1; Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*.

³⁴⁷ Mrs J. M. Reilly, 16/03/44, R41/114/2.

lower-middle to “middle-middle”-class family’.³⁴⁸ In the mid-1930s, the ‘tired businessman or weary office worker were models frequently invoked to typify the ordinary listener’, again suggesting a class-based perception of the audience as respectably white-collar.³⁴⁹ This perception was inseparable from the BBC’s broadcasting philosophy of public service, high cultural standards and cultural education, and the intimate atmosphere for ‘listening-in’ that it cultivated. The BBC ‘addressed its audience not as a mass audience, “but a constellation of individuals positioned in families”’, who listened in the home.³⁵⁰ As explored above, these listeners were expected to listen intelligently, constructively and with discernment. Moreover, the BBC wanted educated listeners who ‘were not only tolerant but eclectic in their tastes [...] who can listen to and enjoy either Bach or Henry Hall’.³⁵¹ But this ‘ideal-typical’ middle-class, attentive listener, with an eclectic middlebrow taste for both conservative, respectable dance music and (highbrow) serious music, existed only in the ‘corporate mind’ of senior BBC personnel.³⁵² As the letters demonstrate, ‘the Henry Hall fan loathed Bach, while the lover of Bach loathed Henry Hall.’³⁵³

As explored in Chapter 1, attentiveness and choice were an expectation of the early 1930s BBC which sought to ‘encourage discrimination in listening’.³⁵⁴ Attentiveness was central to the BBC’s ‘broader agenda of education’.³⁵⁵ Causal, inattentive listening and ‘tap’ listening, which was ‘the indiscriminating use of radio as “background noise”’, were ‘considered worse than not listening at all’.³⁵⁶ As Nicholls’s ‘How I Listen to Music’ article demonstrated in Chapter 1, real listening behaviour could be something quite different, and there is little evidence that the mass audience more widely followed the BBC’s recommendations. Nevertheless, these recommendations were an important part of the respectability the BBC sought to cultivate, and form a crucial backdrop for the changes brought about by wartime.

The Second World War therefore marked a watershed in the mismatched relationships between the BBC and its listeners, because for the first time it moved beyond this idealisation to address the different realities of its audiences’ listening environments, habits and communities. The important wartime audiences to which the Forces Programme catered, such as servicemen and factory workers, were formed of social cross-sections of displaced individuals, and their musical needs had to be catered for. As introduced above, one of the most important effects of World

³⁴⁸ Nicholas, ‘The People’s Radio’, 64.

³⁴⁹ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 374.

³⁵⁰ Nicholas, ‘The People’s Radio’, 65.

³⁵¹ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 206.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 221.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 206–7.

³⁵⁴ Nicholas, ‘The People’s Radio’, 65.

³⁵⁵ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 21.

³⁵⁶ Nicholas, ‘The People’s Radio’, 65.

War Two was to remove the experience of wireless music from the home and displace it into communal workplace and military environments, thus inherently changing the nature of the experience for listeners. The new network was specifically designed with communal barrack-and-canteen based listening conditions of servicemen (and later, factory workshops) in mind.³⁵⁷ Moreover, the Forces Programme represented an acknowledgement that 'one of the functions of radio was to provide light background entertainment for the casual listener' in a noisy, public environment.³⁵⁸ These new groups and conditions presented the antithesis of the traditional attentive domestic listener the BBC had prized.

The majority of the surviving letters were written by domestic listeners, and unfortunately shed little light on the impact this transition had for the Programme's intended audience. The paper by Korczynski *et al.* on women singing in the workplace offers valuable insight into the real experience of workplace programmes.³⁵⁹ Of interest here is how the new content and structure of popular new wartime programmes, specifically workplace broadcasts and message programmes, affected the experiences and opinions of the domestic listeners who formed a large proportion of their audiences.³⁶⁰

By 1940, the BBC's perceptions of its domestic audience were also changing, illustrated by a new policy that portrayed the 'average listener' as provincial, blue-collar, elementary-school educated and not well-read.³⁶¹ A further important step was that this portrait now included women, specifically working-class housewives, recognised for the first time as a large and important component of its national audience, who used the wireless even more than their husbands.³⁶² Whilst the Forces Programme had proven immediately popular with servicemen, it also quickly acquired a large civilian audience, most notably these very housewives. Nicholas argues that their 'existence as a significant component of the daily audience was one of the BBC's most striking wartime discoveries'.³⁶³ Therefore, in one step, the BBC had acknowledged and thus legitimised the existence of communal, casual and background listening, and recognised new and distinct bodies of listeners who formed the majority of its daily audience and who listened in new ways.³⁶⁴ Predictably, the Forces Programme faced vociferous criticism for its basis in background listening and abandonment of traditional cultural aims.³⁶⁵

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

³⁵⁹ Korczynski *et al.*, "'We Sang Ourselves through That War'".

³⁶⁰ Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', 71.

³⁶¹ 'Broadcasting Policy', Listener Research Department, 27/08/40, BBC WAC R9/15/1. Quoted in *ibid.*, 72.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 72.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 71.

³⁶⁴ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 48–53.

³⁶⁵ For example, in letter from John Trevalyan, 07/05/42, R41/114/1 (see below).

There was one further dimension to the BBC's perception of its listeners, as introduced in Chapter 1. The self-improving, 'conscience-stricken'³⁶⁶ listener was a student of the mass appreciation movement that had found an ideal home and instrument in the broadcast medium. This type of listener, the 'lower middlebrow',³⁶⁷ existed within musical culture more widely (as discussed in the following chapters), and the educative mission, medium and programming of the BBC were ideally suited to their desire to improve their musical appreciation. Such listeners 'felt they *ought* to like good music but were worried that they could not understand it', and received guidance from Walford Davies, Basil Maine and Percy Scholes in the format of broadcast talks about music. Davies, Maine and Scholes attempted to guide listeners' tastes towards a 'slightly more sophisticated appreciation of musical form, and a greater ability to respond to the more demanding music in the classical repertoire'.³⁶⁸ The BBC considered this to be 'vital' missionary work as part of their wider educative philosophy, and it was a cultural phenomenon that tied in closely with the musical establishment's ideological desire for a musical public with a taste for serious music (see Chapter 1). The Forces were considered to require particular support in cultural matters, especially as they were already uprooted from their lives and cultures.

As one letter-writer demonstrates, 'there was something touching in the gratitude of ordinary listeners who felt they were improving under such radio tutelage'.³⁶⁹ Lady Gertrude Peers was a cultural climber who, having passed the middlebrow Beethoven-Tchaikovsky-Brahms standard of Romantic symphonic repertoire at which most self-improvers halted, was tackling the 'commanding heights of truly musical culture' in highbrow modern music.³⁷⁰ Her letter is an illumination of a large section of the listening audience who have received little attention in the literature, and epitomises the model of behaviour outlined in Chapter 1.

I want to thank you so much for all you do in helping people to enjoy music. It is a wonderful gift to give and still more wonderful to receive. For a very long time I could never understand or enjoy the new modern music, but I was convinced that it was not the composers but my own stupidity that was the barrier. I went on listening though frankly I did not like it & I listened whenever I could [...] - and then it came It was like a deaf man suddenly hearing. Of course I still have a long way to go, but I can hear and enjoy. It was wonderful & I felt I must write and [thank] you & thank you again.³⁷¹

³⁶⁶ Defined as such by Basil Maine, one of the BBC's central proponents of musical education. Basil Maine, *Reflected Music* (1930), 131–3, quoted in Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 213.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 213.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 214.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 216.

³⁷¹ Lady Gertrude Peers, 25/01/44, R41/114/2.

Having expressed her gratitude, Peers discusses the plight of similar 'semi-deaf' people who had moved beyond popular music and were 'trying to appreciate what they call classical music'. She was also deeply concerned with the cultural welfare of the men in the Forces, and the remainder of her letter is a request for the BBC to continue its educative work with 'simple and human' talks to illuminate 'the desolating boredom' of men stationed at isolated sites. An important consideration is that Peers, as did Wilenski in Chapter 1, believed that her 'own stupidity' and lack of ability was the primary factor in a lack of enjoyment in her musical experiences, and as such her mind-set and approach to listening inherently shaped her relationship with music. This idea recurs in Chapter 3. Becoming a highbrow was evidently about more than enjoying the music, because it meant that having literally 'bettered' yourself you could align yourself with the cultural elite: it was a position of cultural status.

1.4. Popularity, democracy and a hierarchy of listeners

The popularity of music was a key factor and function of listeners' relationships with the wartime BBC. In its policy of 'mixed programming' that provided music, talks, variety, and features side-by-side, the BBC had a unique relationship with the vast morass of musical genres explored in Chapter 1. There are two important themes within the letters that demonstrate the hierarchy of listeners during the Second World War, with respect to their programming needs and how much the BBC valued them. The first relates to the hierarchy of music, and thus taste publics, according to popularity; the second relates to the social status of individual listeners.

Crisell argues that 'shifting and paradoxical notions' of 'democratic' programming underset the wartime changes in BBC policies.³⁷² In the 1930s, mixed programming sought to provide the best of every kind of music. Crisell describes this phase of BBC programming as a 'democracy [that] consists of giving all the people what they want', which was instead undemocratic as listeners got a great deal of music they did not like and not enough of what they did.³⁷³ Moreover, its educative commitment to providing what it believed the audience 'needed' (that is, 'good music') as opposed to what it wanted (light entertainment and dance music) also led to the BBC being accused of undemocratic elitism.³⁷⁴ However, as part of the ideological equivalence granted to popular and classical music during World War Two (Rose's 'uneasy kind of elevated classlessness'),³⁷⁵ progressive shifts occurred within the relationship of both cultures at the BBC. The pre-war educational and culturally elitist mission was tempered by the need to service the

³⁷² Crisell, *An Introductory History*, 27–8.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', 63.

³⁷⁵ Rose, *Which People's War?*, 286.

demands of the listeners, in order to uphold morale and combat competition from foreign commercial stations.

During World War Two the BBC took an increasingly populist approach to its programming that prioritised the needs and morale of specific groups identified as crucial to the war-effort: servicemen and war-industry workers.³⁷⁶ In order to do so, the BBC found that 'their tastes *had to be discovered and catered for*'.³⁷⁷ As such, 'the conventional view of the wartime BBC is one of cumulative "democratization" as the BBC became more obviously responsive to listeners' tastes'.³⁷⁸ This shift can be seen as a move towards the utilitarian notion of democracy, of giving the *majority* of people what they want, which was 'positively despotic' because the minority taste publics got nothing at all.³⁷⁹ This was a well-documented source of tension within the corporation that is also documented in the letters because it greatly affected the listeners as they navigated the new musical landscape of wartime radio. The evolution of the BBC's cultural and populist priorities between 1939 and 1945 can be seen in the changing quantities of different genres of music programmed.³⁸⁰ Certainly, as the Second World War progressed and the BBC altered its priorities and policies, music considered to be a niche taste received less air-time than commercially popular music. Popular programmes were allocated peak slots in the broadcasting schedules, and niche genres were moved to times that were generally unfavourable to their public (see below).

Most of the five letters written about tastes (see Table 2.1 above) were intended to persuade the BBC of the cause of small, specific genres of music that it was believed deserved increased broadcasting hours. Listeners espoused the causes of cinema organists, part-singing, organ recitals, swing, 'straight' piano music, and modern music.³⁸¹ For example, the lack of (serious) contemporary modern music was compared with the predominant broadcasting of popular middlebrow repertoire: 'old masters', 'hoary veterans of Victorian & Edwardian mediocrity', 'antiquated excerpts' and hackneyed pieces.³⁸²

These listeners attempted to persuade the BBC of the validity of their cases with various tools, such as appealing to the BBC's notion of 'good music', or collecting signatures for a petition to demonstrate the tangible support of the musical community. This behaviour shows that listeners

³⁷⁶ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 52–3, 196.

³⁷⁷ Crisell, *An Introductory History*, 54.

³⁷⁸ Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', 63.

³⁷⁹ Crisell, *An Introductory History*, 27–8.

³⁸⁰ See Asa Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless*, vol. II, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 54; *The War of Words*, vol. III, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), 596–7.

³⁸¹ M. Watts, 24/07/44; R41/113/1, Eleanor Sackett, 22/11/44, R41/114/2; 'The Swing Club' (c/o Ray J. Perry, Secretary), 03/04/45, R41/113/2; Wilfred Ramsey, 12/02/45, R41/114/3.

³⁸² Wilfred Ramsey, 12/02/45, R41/114/3.

thoroughly understood their relationship with the BBC and recognised ways of getting their voices heard, even if they proved ultimately futile. Two of these listeners, Eleanor Sackett and Raymond Perry, devised and sent full programmes for the enjoyment of part-singing and swing listeners, the communities to which they respectively belonged. Perry also offered to write a script, noting the importance of proper jive vocabulary and informal Americanized presentation to the success of swing programmes, an important point with regard to the value of musical terminology in cultural integration as discussed in Chapters 1 and 5.³⁸³ The way both positioned themselves within the cultural hierarchy added legitimacy and power to their needs. Perhaps, however, this was also an expression of conformity, and an attempt to neutralise the 'minority' identity of their specific tastes.

The letters demonstrate that a popular method, as Silvey mentioned above, was to claim a position of representation for a wider listening community. William S. Stevens, appealing twice for more 'straight piano music', argued that

What we are usually supplied with is either two pianos wrestling with each other in gymnastic competition, or else highbrow classics which sound like somebody practicing the five ~~gi~~ finger exercises.³⁸⁴

He validated his request for a lunch-hour repeat of the Arthur Sandler's Palm Court Hotel programme by not only referencing general popularity but also by supporting it with confirmation of the fact: he had heard 'nothing but praise' for Sandler's programme. When this was politely turned down by the BBC, he followed up:

[I] realise that it is impossible for you to comply with the wishes of everybody at the same time. This was the point I had in view when I wrote my letter, namely to endeavour to please the largest number of Listeners, and further at meal times most people like Light Music to help digest their food.³⁸⁵

Stevens demonstrates that the utilitarian democracy that underpinned wartime programming was understood by listeners, in which the continued broadcasting of niche genres must have appeared fragile. However, the canner listeners made careful use of tangible evidence to support their argument for a wider demand. For example, H.L. Reeve referenced the 'numerous requests for more organ recitals by listeners' recently printed in the *Radio Times*, and made his request 'on behalf of several organ enthusiasts I know'. Reeve wrote specifically to request further broadcast recitals by Dr Harry Moreton of Plymouth, noting that

³⁸³ 'The Swing Club' (c/o Ray J. Perry, Secretary), 03/04/45, R41/113/2.

³⁸⁴ William S. Stevens, 23/05/44, and BBC reply 30/05/44, R41/114/2.

³⁸⁵ William S. Stevens, 02/06/44, R41/114/2.

[h]ere [is] a case of the talent of one of our foremost organists being lost to music lovers, please enable them to enjoy and appreciate it again. The lovers of 'straight' organs are not in such a minority as it might be supposed.

A word about the times of such recitals. The absurd time of 9 o.c. Saturday mornings, as present scarce organ recitals sometimes the only one in the week, seem to be broadcast, how many people are expected to be able to listen? The days of Saturday morning half day belong the past, or at least are not of the present. Why not reasonable times in the evening, most people are away from their homes all day.³⁸⁶

An important point here is that for listeners such as Reeve, the medium of radio had for many years granted unprecedented access to music that appealed to their tastes. Therefore when this access was lost, or moved to an 'absurd time' in contrast to the peak provision previously enjoyed, it had a considerable effect upon everyday listening habits and experiences, and more widely on the opportunity listeners had to enjoy music. For both Reeve and Stevens, the time of programmes was an important consideration, and a reminder of the unique way in which the radio structured the everyday lives of its listeners. Notably, none of these letters had any effect on the BBC's programming policy.

The second consideration in the hierarchy of listeners refers to the social status of specific individuals. As noted above many letters preserved in the files were from the social and political elite who often had personal connections within top BBC personnel. This suggests that the unsolicited opinions of this section of the national audience were more prized. That their opinions were also highly valued is evidenced by the longer, personal replies sent back in contrast to the formulaic responses often issued in response to popular topics that generated a large amount of letters, such as crooning.³⁸⁷ The interest in this hierarchy stems from the familiarity, frankness and assumed shared knowledge these letters and their replies convey, with particular regard to the ideological valuing of serious music and cultural values of the BBC.

For example, John Trevalyan, Director of Education for Westmoreland County Council, 'a prominent figure in Westmoreland music-making, and a keen listener to radio music',³⁸⁸ wrote to

³⁸⁶ H. L. Reeve, 08/10/44, R41/114/2.

³⁸⁷ A thirty-name petition about crooning is followed in the files by two internal memos on the 'Ban on Crooners', in which R.J.F. Howgill, Assistant Controller (Programmes), recommended the following formulaic response to the Secretariat: 'It is the aim of the Corporation to raise the standard of its dance music programmes and in doing this it is necessary to exclude items which are slushy in sentiment or contain innuendo or other matter considered to be offensive from the point of view of good taste, and to exclude any form of anaemic or debilitated vocal performance and over-sentimentality. It is unavoidable that in carrying out this policy certain items and certain methods of interpretation cannot be accepted.' Petition, 19/04/43; Memo, Secretariat to Assistant Controller (Programmes), 30/04/43; Memo from R.J.F. Howgill, 04/05/44, R41/113/1.

³⁸⁸ Internal memo, Johnstone to Deputy Director of Music, 12/05/42, R41/114/1.

his friend Maurice Johnstone, North Region Music Director, to complain about the decrease in the cultural and educational standards of the BBC since the Forces Programme began. Trevalyan argued that announcers assisted in the decline of public taste with the phrases ‘Now here is something which everyone will like’ for light music following Bach, and ‘high spot’ within a classical recital.³⁸⁹ Following this, he complained that ‘fine programmes of good music [...] are swamped in programme time by music of poor quality’. ‘Good music’ for Trevalyan was the assumed title of serious music, and his complaints about terminology, as with Perry above, relate to the importance of musical terminology in creating and sustaining musical communities, analysed in Chapter 5. However, his primary concern was with the quality of broadcast music more widely and the notion of ‘good’ light music is discussed in both Trevalyan’s letter and Johnstone’s reply.

The key point here is that Trevalyan’s letter sparked two internal memos in which Johnstone instructed the Music and Presentation Departments on Trevalyan’s views and the implications for broadcasting quality. Moreover, Johnstone replied that ‘I readily admit that your opinion is much more valuable to us than that of the habitual grumbler’.³⁹⁰ Trevalyan’s letter, therefore, received more attention because it echoed sentiments held by important personnel within the BBC establishment about the effect of the Forces Programme on the cultural and educative mission the corporation had previously prioritised. Alongside the letter from Lady Peers, it is also an important reminder that despite the mass popularity of the Forces programme, the higher cultural ideologies about music also remained a prominent concern for a particular class of listeners.

Another letter demonstrates the effect of the newer hierarchy within the BBC audience upon a listener who felt uncomfortable with the new social balance, which gave preference to the musical needs of the Forces with specially designed programmes. S. J. Watson, a disgruntled ‘habitual grumbler’ of the type Johnstone described, wrote to complain about *Forces’ Choice*, a programme which featured gramophone records chosen and presented by members of the Forces and related Home Front industries.³⁹¹ Watson complained about his experience of the programme, and the unsatisfactory musical tastes of the chosen individual:

I have just been listening to “Forces Choice”. Today [*sic.*] the choice was made by a Mr. W. Maxwell an aircraft worker, and I have seldom [*sic.*] listened to such a selection of “tripe” records. Only one record was worthy of being called music, the Moisevitch [*sic.*] one. I am enclosing herewith a programme of records which I recently prepared to

³⁸⁹ John Trevalyan, 07/05/42, R41/114/1.

³⁹⁰ Reply to John Trevalyan, 09/05/42, R41/114/1.

³⁹¹ Described in the *Radio Times*, 27/02/42, 18.

give to our Local CD. services, and should like the opportunity of hearing some of them in this programme. You should call them Town Councillors choice if you like, I don't seem to remember a Councillor giving a programme in this series, and after all it is a "service".³⁹²

There are two notable themes here. Firstly, that Maxwell's choice included celebrity classical performers such as Moiseiwitsch, and yet his musical taste could more widely could be considered un-musical 'tripe'. This indirectly suggests that this was a programme of middlebrow tastes, although unfortunately Watson did not list his own or Maxwell's choices of records further. Secondly, this letter demonstrates how feelings about a musical experience, in particular within the daily, ubiquitous framework of the wireless, could be inherently influenced by the Second World War and the disruption it caused to the social structure of the country, and by an individual's personal life, sense of identity and value within the wartime nation. As the examples of listeners with minority tastes also show, the nature and presence of radio exposed listeners to this fragmented whole on a daily basis, and thus required listeners to fight for their musical individuality.

2. The physical and ideological effects of the Second World War

As an aural medium, music formed a large proportion of the BBC's output. Broadcasting uprooted and brought together into one 'strange new abstract unity' a conglomerate of musical genres and listeners from every social and economic setting.³⁹³ Listeners would have found beloved, unfamiliar, and disliked music co-existing in the BBC's 'mixed programming' policies of music, drama, talks and entertainment. The proximity of tastes, competition for programme space, and centrally imposed music policies encouraged a process of 'cultural stratification' within the BBC's output that sought to create a hierarchy of musical respectability and quality. This generally meant the best of 'serious' music, although the 1930s also witnessed the continual evolution and legitimisation of popular music, specifically dance music.³⁹⁴

During the Second World War, the function of the BBC changed as it shifted from 'from a provider of private or familial enjoyment and self-improvement to a vital instrument of public information and entertainment'.³⁹⁵ Importantly, this altered the ideological and cultural function of broadcasting as the BBC modified its pre-war 'cultural elitism' to enable the prioritisation of

³⁹² S. J. Watson, 05/12/43, R41/114/2. In a later letter of appreciation, Watson notes that he usually writes in a 'condemnatory mood'. 03/04/45, R41/114/3.

³⁹³ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 182.

³⁹⁴ See Nott, *Music for the People*, 62; Baade, *Victory through Harmony*; "'The Dancing Front'".

³⁹⁵ Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', 63.

national morale. Nicholas argues that the new situation was ‘an uneasy kind of “elevated classlessness” that broke new ground’ whilst clinging to established traditions.³⁹⁶

The number of wireless licences soared as BBC grew in popularity in the 1930s,³⁹⁷ as did the popularity of commercial radio stations. Continental radio stations such as Radio Normandie and Radio Luxembourg had become a prominent additional source of popular music entertainment since the 1920s, and by the mid-1930s ‘were providing a truly complete and “national” service that offered a viable alternative to the BBC’.³⁹⁸ They captured substantial audiences, especially on Sundays, because in contrast to the BBC they predominantly provided commercial, ‘unashamedly populist’ music.³⁹⁹ This ‘appealed directly to the tastes of the working and lower-middle-class’ and audiences were not confined by geographic region or class.⁴⁰⁰ Moreover, they offered broadcasts to Britain ‘by British programme makers using British “stars”’, in streams of constant, commercialised popular music.⁴⁰¹ Therefore, when the programmes on the BBC proved unpalatable to listeners, they simply tuned into these foreign stations instead. As the letters below demonstrate, this practice continued unabated throughout the Second World War and was frequently touted as a symbol of resistance to the BBC’s decision making.

2.1. Listening at times of change and controversy

This section discusses the opinions of listeners on the programming and policy changes made by the BBC during World War Two. Within the surviving letters, there is a concentration around these periods of change that likely only reflects the BBC’s own vested interest in the events and topics. These include the outbreak of war, the introduction of the Forces Programme and its work-place broadcasts, the controversy of 1942 to 1943 following the BBC ‘ban on crooners’, the 1943 disbandment of the BBC Military Band, and the advent of General Forces Programme (GFP) in 1944 and its dance music. However, these letters also demonstrate that the BBC functioned as a symbol, or reflection, of regularity and constancy throughout the Second World War, providing listeners with a sense of normality in which they had an emotional investment.

On 1 September 1939 the BBC launched its wartime contingency plans in response to the expected crisis, and converted its Home and Regional Networks to a single, dispiriting national Home Service, and so in effect immediately robbing its audience of their familiar choice of national and local content.⁴⁰² The opening weeks of war were characterised by the BBC’s

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ See Chapter 1.

³⁹⁸ Nott, *Music for the People*, 67.

³⁹⁹ Crisell, *An Introductory History*, 47.

⁴⁰⁰ Nott, *Music for the People*, 67.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴⁰² *BBC Handbook 1940*, 41.

'Emergency Policy' of constant, monotonously cheerful light music, frequent news, and informative talks. Regular programmes were cancelled. The Gramophone Department had precise instructions: 'Everything must be gay and cheerful. German music must be avoided. Beethoven was banned, though a dash of Mozart was permissible'.⁴⁰³ Strikingly, this policy set out an immediate stance on enemy music that contrasted with later attitudes and the mass popularity of the classical canon (see Chapter 1).⁴⁰⁴ Music was primarily provided by records and by endless hours of theatre organ interludes heroically played by Sandy McPherson.⁴⁰⁵

Few listeners can have been satisfied by the BBC's initial output, whether they were fans of popular or highbrow music. A frustrated Adrian Boult, then BBC Music Director, considered that only 15 minutes of music for the 'genuine music lover' were broadcast in the first two weeks of war, suggesting that 'thinking listeners' nationwide were irritated at being plunged into light music.⁴⁰⁶ Failing to cater for its audiences' varied cultural needs, the BBC was subject to a venomous press campaign from mid-September until the resumption of normal programmes in early November. As Chapter 1 outlines, the public were largely confined to their homes and as such many listeners turned to alternative radio stations. Radios Luxembourg and Normandie went off the air soon after the outbreak of war and the notorious, propaganda-filled German Radio Hamburg became hugely popular. 'For the first time the BBC found itself in the position of needing to attract audiences, for reasons (it appeared) of both national security and national morale', and keeping the nation off enemy airwaves became an important wartime priority.⁴⁰⁷

Only two letters have survived from the 'phoney' first months of the Second World War. One questions the categorisation of light music,⁴⁰⁸ the other demonstrates the effect of the uncertainty and lack of music on the hopes of a listener. Viscountess Bridgeman wrote:

I do hope it will be found possible to continue broadcasting Chamber Music during the war, especially by the Menges String Quartet.

There must be a very large proportion of people who feel as I do.⁴⁰⁹

Perhaps stemming from an encultured class-based or highbrow politeness, Bridgeman's letter does not display the passionate language that has been witnessed in the less socially elite listeners or, for example, in Salter's similar request for chamber music. Nevertheless the specificity of her request and belief in a large, similarly minded audience provide similarities with

⁴⁰³ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 203.

⁴⁰⁴ See MacKay, 'Being Beastly to the Germans'; Morris, 'Battle for Music'.

⁴⁰⁵ Zeigler, *London at War*, 198.

⁴⁰⁶ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 203.

⁴⁰⁷ Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', 69.

⁴⁰⁸ Austin Coates, 08/10/39, R41/114/1.

⁴⁰⁹ Viscountess Mary Bridgeman, 15/09/39, R41/114/1.

the letters in the previous section that asked for music of minority popularity. It is unusual amongst the letters about serious music that performers rather than composers were the focus, which perhaps positions her as a discerning listener of true highbrow taste, a concept that Chapter 3 discusses. Luckily for Bridgeman, the Music Department's 'backbone' of twice-weekly symphony concerts, regular recitals and chamber music was quickly restored, and Boult's 'thinking listeners' were relieved. Indeed, by 1942–3, the BBC handbooks proudly reported the renewed efforts given to excellence in serious music.⁴¹⁰

After its first disastrous weeks, the BBC successfully took on new functions, and secured its place in the nation. These included championing national music,⁴¹¹ maintaining pride and morale, and creating a unique 'life-line' between displaced communities and families through request and message programmes designed to create on-air comfort and intimacy.⁴¹² The most famous of these programmes was Vera Lynn's *Sincerely Yours*, in which she sang and shared news from servicemen's families; however many others offered different styles of music.⁴¹³ As a result, the Second World War did little to reduce the volume of letters from listeners the BBC received. For example, Sandy MacPherson's popular wartime request programme 'Sandy's Half-Hour', received enough post to cause government controversy about the direction of vital war-effort labour resources into handling the programme's post.⁴¹⁴

The first major point of change for the wartime BBC was the Forces Programme, which was developed as an experimental measure to secure the morale of the British Expeditionary Forces and to counter soldiers' use of the French commercial station Radio Fécamp.⁴¹⁵ Although the programming remained 'mixed' (formed of familiar variety, dance music and talks) it was also significantly narrowed to remain entertaining and undemanding.⁴¹⁶ The programme was initially proposed as a temporary measure, and it was assumed that civilians would remain loyal to the Home Service, which allowed BBC chiefs to ignore the far-reaching implications outlined above. Instead, by the time of the British Expeditionary Forces' return to Britain in June 1940, civilian listener numbers had risen and by 1942 they outnumbered Forces listeners by 'about ten to one'.⁴¹⁷ The Forces Programme now functioned as an alternative network for civilians to the Home Service, providing increasingly popular programmes, most notably dance music.

⁴¹⁰ *BBC Handbook 1942* (London: BBC), 33–8, 81–2; *BBC Year Book 1943* (London: BBC), 31–7, 72–3.

⁴¹¹ See Morris, 'Battle for Music'.

⁴¹² Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 55.

⁴¹³ For an interesting analysis of the controversy surrounding Lynn's success, see Guthrie, 'Vera Lynn on Screen'.

⁴¹⁴ 15 documents (from 23/02/42 onwards) are archived in R41/113/1, showing the fallout from a BBC report noting Sandy's swollen 5,000-letter-per-week postbag (usually 2,000–3,000) and three secretaries.

⁴¹⁵ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 48–9.

⁴¹⁶ Crisell, *An Introductory History*, 54–5.

⁴¹⁷ *BBC Year Book 1943* (London: BBC), 96.

Following this came the success of workplace-oriented programmes, cleverly designed to encompass both professional and amateur music-making: *Music While You Work* (MWYW), broadcast on the Forces Programme from June 1940; *Workers' Playtime*, broadcast from factories via ENSA, on the Home Service from 1941; and *Works Wonders* broadcast on the Home Service and featured the factories' own amateur musicians. The first two of these long outlived both World War Two and their original objectives, until 1968 and 1964 respectively. The advent of programmes designed specifically to accompany factory work, with the official intention of increasing productivity, were 'a turning-point in the history of music in Britain'.⁴¹⁸ As Chapter 1 acknowledges, background music was not a new practice; however the 'systematic exploitation' of music 'to influence states of mind and human activity' was.⁴¹⁹ MWYW was broadcast to lift the spirits, 'lessen strain, relieve monotony and thereby increase efficiency'.⁴²⁰ It was 'notable for being the BBC's first programme designed to be nothing more nor less than background noise [...] bright, familiar, rhythmic live band music' without vocals, intended for simultaneous working and listening.⁴²¹ This special type of listening has an interesting relationship with the types discussed in Chapter 1. It was multi-modal and participatory, especially as female workers frequently sang along,⁴²² and yet the listening was expected to be secondary and subordinate to the work, and moreover a means to increase it. Therefore, there is a curious resemblance to the role of listening when dancing (see Chapter 4), which had a comparable social and physical framework and environment. The BBC acknowledged that 'these programmes are purely utilitarian; they do not need much contrast either in style or dynamics [...] [they] just try to make the period one of unrelieved BRIGHTNESS AND CHEERFULNESS.'⁴²³

Factory programmes were regularly popular with audiences of seven to eight million listeners including civilians and this evident popularity led to regular scheduling in peak programmes hours. One letter demonstrates that some were discontent with this popularity. P. Guedalla, a self-confessed lowbrow listener, deplored the distinctive musical character of the programmes, and especially the inclusion of amateurs:

Unless it has been laid down by some higher authority that frequent broadcasts by Works' Bands constitute an essential ingredient in the maintenance of industrial peace for the high purposes of the war-effort, I venture to suggest that we are hearing far too

⁴¹⁸ Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance*, 93.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴²⁰ Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years*, 193.

⁴²¹ Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', 83.

⁴²² Korczynski *et al.*, "'We Sang Ourselves through That War'".

⁴²³ Hutchinson to Watt, Internal Memo 10/7/40, BBC WAC R27/257/1, quoted in Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', 83.

much of these well-meaning amateurs. There appears to be at least one per day, and they even appear at the most popular listening hour on Saturday.

I write as a musical lowbrow, who is tuned in far more frequently to the Forces than to the Home programme. Yet nothing can be more tedious and distressing than the toneless blasting of familiar airs by these worthy people. [...] Let us, by all means, have brass bands, and let them play marches. But need they be amateurs, and need they play them with the flaccid beat of the Foundry and Blast-furnace Band?⁴²⁴

Guedalla evidently appreciated the sentiment behind the programme, its worthiness towards the war-effort and 'well-meaning' performers, and yet this did not detract from his annoyance at the frequency of bad quality performance. In contrast to other letters, his self-identification as a lowbrow does not aspire to cultural status; however, paradoxically this gave him a form of legitimacy as a listener who preferred the populist Forces Programme and was likely expected to enjoy such light music. This demonstrates that 'good' music and the quality of repertoire and performance was a concern of all types of listeners and for all tastes.

One of the well-documented musical issues the wartime BBC faced is the infamous crooning controversy of 1942–3, when the BBC attempted to ban overtly sentimental songs and vocalists who sang in this American fashion.⁴²⁵ The BBC policy to provide 'the best' of musical culture enabled them 'to discriminate on the listeners' behalf between "the good" and "the inferior" in popular culture'.⁴²⁶ As the crooning controversy demonstrates, this was 'often decided on moral rather than aesthetic or intellectual grounds'.⁴²⁷

1942 'was a turning point in the BBC's wartime approach to popular music'⁴²⁸ and its new Dance Music Policy affected the fate of popular singers, dance bands and theatre organs in the broadcasting schedule. The Variety Department's Dance Music Policy Committee (DMPC) became a 'cultural arbiter', judging the respective merits of popular songs as the Second World War increased the BBC's list of unsuitable subjects, styles and lyrics.⁴²⁹ As Baade and Guthrie have shown in detail, the controversy about crooning and sentimentality was inextricably linked with wider wartime concerns about masculinity within the troops and the effect upon national morale.⁴³⁰ The 'allegedly debilitating influence' of this performance style, and its related songs and singers, were considered by the BBC to be 'anaemic' and 'slushy in sentiment'.⁴³¹ However,

⁴²⁴ P. Guedalla, 04/07/43, R41/113/1.

⁴²⁵ See Baade, *Victory through Harmony*.

⁴²⁶ Crisell, *An Introductory History*, 29–30.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁸ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 133–4.

⁴²⁹ Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', 81–2.

⁴³⁰ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 132–4; Guthrie, 'Vera Lynn on Screen'.

⁴³¹ Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', 82.

and crucially, crooning was widely popular with the public and aroused strong reactions and sentiment from fans, as the letters demonstrate. Moreover, letters from both sets of files, classical and popular, discuss the issue, demonstrating how widely invested the public was in the matter.

After the alleged banning of Geraldo's vocalist Len Camber, the DMPC were labelled the 'Anti-Slush Committee' by members of the daily press, which inspired seventeen of his fans signing this petition to the BBC:

Slush! May I ask you for a definition of this word? What exactly do you consider is slush? These things have puzzled my friends and I ever since we read in a daily paper that the B.B.C. has formed an Anti-Slush Committee.

I suppose that some modern dance tunes are melancholy [*sic.*], but then you will have to admit that this is also the case in some "highbrow" music, but you would never think of banning that because it is considered "good" music.

Not all people have a liking for this "good" music, and even the people who do must admit that they like to hear the music termed as slush now and again.⁴³²

This was not the only petition received on the matter⁴³³ and as referenced above⁴³⁴ the BBC Secretariat was advised to follow a formulaic response that cited acceptable standards to require the exclusion of 'items which are slushy in sentiment', or offensive to 'good taste'. The petition's discussion of 'good' music presents another means by which listeners attempted to persuade the BBC. It appealed to high culture and the notions of quality and value the corporation was known to espouse, albeit in this case to expose the cultural differences. As argued above, 'good taste' was for most listeners a relative notion dependent on their cultural values; therefore it is interesting that the BBC chose this significant controversy as an opportunity to assert its own culturally biased perception as overruling.

However, dance-music enthusiasts were not united on the subject of crooning, as shown by a letter from Sir Robert Lockhart, who favoured Joe Loss and his Band 'from the Astoria Dance Salon' to 'horrid vocalists wailing the most terrible rubbish'.⁴³⁵ Like other listeners, Lockhart switched to a foreign station to 'at least get decent music' when the BBC failed to provide it.

⁴³² Petition, 22/04/43, R41/113/1.

⁴³³ A thirty-name petition was also received on the singers ban, 19/04/42, R41//114/2, which resulted in two memos between the secretariat and Assistant Controller (R.J.F. Howgill) on the BBC's position on the matter.

⁴³⁴ See note 387.

⁴³⁵ Sir Robert C. Lockhart, 05/01/39, R41/113/1.

Above all, the dispute over crooning illuminates the truly fragmented nature and tastes of the general public.

On the opposing side was Oscar Pulvermacher, an opinionated and patriotic highbrow listener who held important rank within the national press. He wrote twice to the newly appointed Music Director, Arthur Bliss, an ally against crooning and dance music.

How delighted my wife and I were when we read that you were knocking out some of the awful stuff we should have had to listen to if radio sets had not been fitted with that magnificent route to oblivion – a switch.

But it's still being inflicted upon us. I turn on my set a few minutes before midnight, in order to hear if anything fresh has occurred in the war, and five nights out of six I hear some whining woman or whining man exuding (I cannot call it singing) the most debasing words, and entirely lacking melody.⁴³⁶

His terminology is reminiscent of the BBC's own, if far less elegant, and invokes a colourful image. His letter is also interesting because it reveals a rare picture of the wider context for Pulvermacher's experiences and radio listening habits. This demonstrates how the ubiquity of the radio medium shaped the public's interactions with music more widely through frequent unintended exposure, which nevertheless engaged listeners, left an impression and caused passionate responses. Another letter from Pulvermacher written a year later, also survives and shows that this remained an issue for him. He requested further banning of 'rubbishy' dance bands on the grounds of huge audiences for the BBC orchestra and evocatively asked: 'Can't you have a musical policeman to guard your gramophone library?'⁴³⁷

The only other issue on which the BBC preserved multiple petitions was the disbanding of the BBC Military Band, which in contrast to crooning has received little attention in the literature. The decision was made due to the presence of 'many first class military bands now available in the Services', who performed in Outside Broadcasts for the BBC.⁴³⁸ The petitions were decorously written on behalf of a union and a music institution who wished to reinstate the Band. For example, the Governors of the Scottish Academy of Music lodged a complaint against this 'unthinkable and regrettable step indeed!', and argued that the given reason 'did not seem to be a convincing or logical reason for the action, unless the Corporation disbanded all its existing groups'.⁴³⁹ The British composer Sir Granville Bantock also wrote to the Band's conductor Major

⁴³⁶ Oscar Pulvermacher, 24/08/42, R41/113/1.

⁴³⁷ Oscar Pulvermacher, 03/06/43, R41/114/2.

⁴³⁸ See Chapter 5. Quotation from BBC's reply to the Walter G. Reid, Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, 13/02/43, R41/114/2. Petition dated 0602/43, R41/114/2.

⁴³⁹ Governors of the Scottish Academy of Music, petition, 29/01/43, R41/114/2.

P.G.S. O'Donnell, to express his regret: 'This regret I know is widely shared by your many listeners and lovers of music. I hope it may be some consolation to realise that you have earned so much grateful appreciation'.⁴⁴⁰ However, this was not a decision the BBC reversed, unable to 'justify' maintaining the band 'under present conditions'.⁴⁴¹

The last stage of the changes within wartime broadcasting was the amalgamation of the domestic Forces Programme and General Overseas Service into the GFP on 27 February 1944. The GFP represented an effort to provide a life-line between the overseas forces and their families on the home front, and increase security in the lead-up to D-Day (6 June 1944). However, the GFP received a public backlash from critics because civilian audiences were exposed to programmes of swing and crooners intended for overseas forces on the General Overseas Service, and its early months 'did far more to highlight the rifts' between these communities than unite them.⁴⁴² The balance between types of music broadcast also changed, and listeners found themselves in unacceptable states of flux and disruption in a fresh negotiation of popularity and demand in the network restructures. As several letters demonstrate, feelings about broadcast music ran high.

For example, M. Watts voiced a colourful complaint against Victor Silvester, whose hugely popular orchestra specialised in straight, 'strict-tempo' dance music that appealed to listeners of catholic tastes.⁴⁴³ Watts included a *Radio Times* cutting announcing Silvester's appearance in a *Music While You 'Sleep'* programme, the altered title intended to prove his point that

Silvesters [*sic.*] Orchestra may sound all right in a Ballroom but the strum, strum, strum on our wireless is worse than Chinese torture.

Why are Cenima [*sic.*] ~~organist~~ organists boycotted? The most popular [feature] on the wireless records or otherwise. Listeners want more light music not so much of this posh muck.⁴⁴⁴

Watts evidently lacked the level of literacy and musical vocabulary of other letter-writers above. However this feature lends his letter a passionate and evocative language that demonstrates how deeply his experience affected him. Whilst the tone of the letter is not polite, the comparison drawn to 'Chinese torture' is striking in its historical context. Moreover, it is interesting in relation to the discussion of tastes in Chapter 1 that Watts describes dance music as 'posh muck' and

⁴⁴⁰ Sir Granville Bantock, 21/01/43, R41/114/2.

⁴⁴¹ Reply to Governors of the Scottish Academy of Music, 12/02/43, R41/114/2.

⁴⁴² Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 152, 157–8.

⁴⁴³ See "'The Dancing Front'".

⁴⁴⁴ M. Watts, 24/07/44, R41/113/1.

wishes for more light music on the GFP, on which cinema organs had been curtailed in the network reshuffle.⁴⁴⁵

In contrast, Lieutenant T. Ruck-Keene wrote to protest about his needs as a dance-music connoisseur, which he likewise felt were neglected in the GFP's first months.

I wish to protest most strongly against your un-British and in all respects dictatorial attitude towards dance music, swing and jazz.

Since the General Forces Programme came on, the number of hours during which I listen has decreased by almost 50 %, [and] it is of some interest (to me, at any rate) to note that the ship's company I command spend far more time listening to dance music from enemy stations than they do to what the Corporation has to offer. In my view it is only to be expected. [...]

Of the good musicianly [*sic.*] bands such as Geraldo, Lew Stone, the two leading RAF orchestras, ~~Lew Stone~~ Ted Heath Harry Parry, Carl Brightman, Buddy Featherstonhaugh and many others, we hear almost nothing; and what we do hear is almost invariably during working hours when the men cannot listen. Jack Payne we hear once and often twice a day – mostly during non-duty hours.

The [banning] of such men as Peter Gray and Cyril [S] of such lyrics as "I Heard You Cried Last Night," ~~is~~ strongly resembles the method of Adolf Hitler, who makes laws without consulting the people concerned.⁴⁴⁶

Ruck-Keene's main contention is with musical quality, musicianship and the programming of hot dance bands and crooners, which remained ongoing issues for the BBC throughout the Second World War. Given this letter's military origins and timing, days before D-Day, it is certainly striking that Ruck-Keene accused the BBC of acting like Hitler, yet perhaps given the circumstances it is unsurprisingly passionate. Ruck-Keene added tangible weight to his complaints by referencing the needs of his ship's company and his acknowledgement of their considerable use of 'enemy' stations adds to this accusation. It also shows the importance of the BBC's wartime battle to win the favour of its fickle listeners, especially within the forces. Equally remarkable is the effect the GFP had upon Ruck-Keene's listening, if 'almost 50%' was a truthful figure, which demonstrates how ubiquitous radio listening was and how reliant a listener could be upon its service. His repeated anti-BBC comments created a powerful political framework from which to justify his position, suggesting a ruthless exploitation of the tools available to persuade the BBC to

⁴⁴⁵ Reply to M. Watts, 29/07/44, R41/113/1.

⁴⁴⁶ Lieut. T. Ruck-Keene, 02/06/44, R41/113/1.

reconsider: and a sympathetic reply promised better dance-band distribution in the near future.⁴⁴⁷

2.2. Appropriate listening for early mornings

Early morning broadcasting, from 6.30am to 10am, was another important innovation during World War Two and introduced listeners to a whole new BBC listening experience that became hotly contested in the matter of personal taste. It offers an interesting insight into the manner in which war indirectly both united and divided the BBC's 'universal audience', exposing the differences of tastes that had to be catered for. Servicemen and war-workers, forced to change their routines and lifestyle for the war effort, initially tuned into foreign stations as there was no early morning BBC service.⁴⁴⁸ In 1940, the BBC expanded the Home Service to broadcast from 7am (previously 10am) to 12.20am, which was then joined by the Forces Programme broadcast from 6.30am to 11pm.⁴⁴⁹ The two services catered for different musical tastes: the Home Service broadcast classical music and talks, and the Forces Programme had cheerful light music and entertainment. Early morning broadcasting rapidly became a peak programming slot. As a fifty-name petition from the Ministry of Aircraft Production, written to complain about the recent policy changes for early mornings immediately post-war, argued: 'It is obvious that this is a peak listening period and a time when the majority would prefer a light programme [...] although we like good music, 7.30 a.m. is scarcely the time to appreciate it'.⁴⁵⁰ Two letters from 1943 similarly demonstrate that listeners had very different ideas about the value of serious music in the morning, which elicited very differing responses that ranged from politely appreciation to dramatic condemnation. A letter from Mrs Reilly, signed by four others, has remarkable echoes of Salter's letter at the beginning of the chapter:

This is to thank [you] for the lovely music we have [been] having in the early mornings lately – also for all the Mozart, Haydn, Handel you have given us at other times of day. Please may we have more (much more if it isn't selfish) of these composers & others such as Bach & Beethoven, without having always to hear modern music directly afterwards? In hospitals & nursing homes concerts early in the evening are most appreciated as both patients & nurses keep early hours.⁴⁵¹

Like Salter, she implies that her preferences might be selfish, and her tastes in composers and reference to modern music implicitly locate her as a listener of middlebrow tastes. Although her letter only briefly mentions early morning music within her broader listening habits, it is

⁴⁴⁷ Reply to Ruck-Keene, 14/06/44, R41/113/1.

⁴⁴⁸ See Nicholas, 'The People's Radio'.

⁴⁴⁹ *BBC Handbook 1941* (London: BBC), 9.

⁴⁵⁰ Petition, 01/08/45, R41/113/2.

⁴⁵¹ J. M. Reilly, 01/09/43, R41/114/2.

nevertheless illuminating of the ubiquity of broadcast serious music within the structure of her everyday life, and perhaps as she suggests, that of her wider social community. In sharp contrast was a letter from Lord Trent, another listener of prominent social status.⁴⁵² Trent was unable to receive the Forces Programme and with his listening experiences thus restricted to a dissatisfactory service, echoed the sentiment of the aircraft-workers' petition:

I cannot imagine that anyone, other than a musical fanatic, can possibly stand classical music on a dull foggy morning before breakfast. I would not be surprised if this and breakfast following on a religious talk and news such as we have been getting lately, is responsible for a large number of the duodenal ulcers from which so many people are suffering.

Is it not possible to have someone like Coleman Smith who at least used to sing a cheerful song during the early morning exercises: but no records, please!⁴⁵³

As with several of the letters above, Trent's dissatisfaction led him to paint an evocative image, one that directly linked early morning musical experience and classical repertoire with the ill-health of the general public. The way he frames his letter with negative reference to an opposing segment of the BBC's audience by describing appreciative listeners as 'musical fanatics' illustrates Scannell and Cardiff's point that 'lowbrows and highbrows defined themselves as much in terms of what they hated as what they liked'.⁴⁵⁴ Perhaps, in fact, it was easier to do so, especially in the heat of writing to dissuade a prominent organisation against their perceived disservice. The striking difference between these two letters illustrates the passion with which listeners voiced complaints in contrast to the predominant politeness of surviving appreciative letters, suggesting that negative effects upon their listening were more strongly felt. This contrast of appreciation and complaint is explored further in Chapter 3 with respect to the nature of Bradley's experiences and bulletins.

2.3. Listeners and wartime nationalism

As introduced in Chapter 1, the subject of nationalism in wartime and its relevance to musical practice and ideology, has been well-documented in the literature. The BBC considered the maintenance of national pride 'through patriotic identification with the nation's history, culture and people' to be one of its most important wartime tasks.⁴⁵⁵ In this light, the fact that listeners frequently exploited the enemy and the war to add weight to their requests and complaints must have been galling. Within the surviving letters, Germany was commonly fêted as a superior

⁴⁵² Lord Trent was John Boot, owner of the company Boots.

⁴⁵³ Lord Trent, 15/12/43, R41/114/2.

⁴⁵⁴ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 207.

⁴⁵⁵ Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', 75.

musical broadcaster of both serious and popular music, whilst other listeners deplored the BBC for airing German musical culture. The contrasting notions both interacted with the nuanced ideologies that surrounded the performance of British and foreign music during the Second World War, and with more widespread opinions about Germany. This section discusses both positions in turn, followed by a third aspect of ideologically nationalist programming, national anthems.

Shane Chichester, Stanley Pearson and Lady Wilson each wrote to suggest that when the BBC gave them jazz, they turned to the enemy for serious music.⁴⁵⁶ Pearson wrote straight to the BBC's then Director-General, Sir Frederick Ogilvie, an old school-friend, to make a passionate complaint about the contrast between BBC jazz and the German 'good music':

As one old Cliftonian to another and hitherto an admirer and staunch supporter of the B.B.C., may I ask why this continual jazz and swing is hurled at us? I am still suffering from the effects of hearing the Volga Boat Song, to my mind an exceedingly pleasant day-starter, being murdered and set to swing by some accursed band at 6-30 this morning. I have taken a consensus of opinion, and have been unable to find anyone who does not loathe this type of music-murder, with the result that we are often forced to go o [sic.] to the Hun to hear good music, which seems all wrong. There may, I appreciate, be reasons that I wot [sic.] not of, but if it is for youth, I suggest they might be educated above it.⁴⁵⁷

Pearson's letter unites many of the themes discussed above. He validated his concerns with a 'consensus' of shared opinions and positioned his complaint within the delicate balance of serious and popular music with which the BBC had long been engaged. He demonstrates a remarkable lack of musical literacy with terms such as 'music-murder' and yet desired 'good' music, implicitly valued above jazz and swing, and likely meaning popular serious music or middlebrow music. Most significantly he, like others, willingly (and without thought of being un-patriotic) turned to the enemy's commercial radio for his listening needs, and used this within his negotiation. Interestingly, Pearson places the fault with the BBC's attention to its educational aims, entangled so closely in wartime with morale and popularity. In reply, Ogilvie demanded credit for the work done in increasing appreciation pre-war, and suggested that Pearson's request for jazz and swing exclusion was unfair to the public.⁴⁵⁸

In contrast are letters that accused the BBC of unpatriotic programming, often in an antagonistic and provocative tone, demanded an introspective, purely British repertoire and musical personnel to dominate the airwaves. During the 1930s, Adrian Boult had fought to maintain an

⁴⁵⁶ Shane Chichester, 26/03/41 and 02/04/41, R41/113/1; Lady Wilson, 20/10/44, R41/113/1.

⁴⁵⁷ Stanley Pearson, 14/07/41, R41/113/1.

⁴⁵⁸ Reply to Stanley Pearson, 27/07/41, R41/113/1.

internationalist Music Department in contrast to the nationalist concerns of the BBC administration, who regularly fought to increase broadcasting of British composers.⁴⁵⁹ This debate, which these listeners joined during the Second World War, was therefore already well-established and controversial. As established in Chapter 1, by 1940 the BBC had created a formal blacklist of banned composers that nevertheless allowed for the performance of the core repertoire of the classical canon to continue to flourish. As the ban was glossed over publicly, listeners lacked information and wrote passionately to the BBC on a clearly provocative subject. Both letters quoted below were written in 1942, during the 'long haul' after the Blitz when victory seemed uncertain, and are filled with fear, discontent and racism.

Oscar Pulvermacher wrote to complain about the use of conductors with German-sounding names and the influx of refugees after an experience the previous evening of a record 'of some orchestral work', adding 'and need I add that it was conducted by somebody with a foreign name?'⁴⁶⁰ Commenting on the excellence of English conductors, he requested that 'may we not – at least during the war – be spared the infliction of foreigners upon us? [...] Can't we give our own splendid musicians a chance, or is there a legion of spiteful little people on the B.B.C. staff?' His letter, although bitter and antagonistic, demonstrates patriotic feeling remarkably absent from the following chapters.

Mrs Lillian Pennock's letter is considerably more resentful of the German music broadcast, underset by the fear inherent in her personal life, of the deaths of her sons. With striking similarity to Pulvermacher, she too complained about refugees and questioned the leadership of the BBC.

I am writing as an English woman and English mother of four sons of military age [...] to enquire – Why is it that we must have German waltzes and German composers thrust down our throats every day of the year when we switch on the wireless? Are their [*sic.*] no other composers in the world of music? Aso [*sic.*] would you enlighten me as to whom runs the B.B.C. Are they Englishmen or German refugees of [whom] we have a surplus.

I should have thought it would have been time enough to listen to German music when they invade us or [are] you preparing to give them a homely friendly greeting when they land?

On the German radio I do not think you will hear English music played and advertised in this way.

⁴⁵⁹ See Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years*.

⁴⁶⁰ Oscar Pulvermacher, 16/02/42, R41/114/1.

Of course, we all know how broad-minded you are but as a mother whose four sons will probably have to give their lives for England I call it disgusting.⁴⁶¹

Pennock's letter is poignant and illuminates a hidden narrative of dissent not found in literature on political music during World War Two.⁴⁶² Popular classical music and the waltzes of light music culture remained dominated by the classical canon which, as Chapters 1 and 3 discuss, was largely drawn from the Austro-Germanic core of master-composers. As with Ruck-Keene's suggestion of Hitler-like dictatorship, the political direction of Pulvermacher and Pennock's letters must have been intended to be hurtful. However, the content of the letters suggests that, in contrast to the majority studied, this stylistic choice was not made to give their opinions power but was rooted in a fear and uncertainty that was part of everyday wartime life.⁴⁶³ Writing to the BBC was perhaps a useful outlet for their frustrations.

A third area of nationalist concern was the broadcast of national anthems, part of the body of traditional, symbolic patriotic music that had an important place in the rituals of broadcasting and wartime more widely (see Chapter 4). As two listeners demonstrated, the inappropriate performance of national anthems was considered culturally and musically disrespectful. Throughout the Second World War, listeners were exposed to the national anthems of a great many Allied countries within the BBC's programmes.⁴⁶⁴ As a symbol of national unity and courage in a time of crisis, national anthems inspired passionate responses in these listeners that demonstrate the effect on a single listening experience. E.G. Selwyn, the Dean of Winchester, wrote:

I was so shocked, and so were my family, when listening to God Save The King before the 9 o'clock news last Sunday evening, that I am venturing to write to you a personal letter about it. The National Anthem can be sung by a chorus or a choir, when it becomes a most impressive prayer, or it can be played by a band or an organ as a dignified piece of ceremonial music. But the production of last Sunday night seemed to us to offend against every canon of taste. It was sung by about four voices as a sort of stage piece, in which it would appear that each performer was trying to out-do every other in the production of bizarre effects. [...] I write in the hope that we may be spared another effusion of this kind in future.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶¹ Mrs Pennock, 12/05/42, R41/114/1.

⁴⁶² For example, Morris, 'Battle for Music'.

⁴⁶³ A similar kind of private fear, and its interaction with (diary) writing is examined in Amy Bell, 'Landscapes of Fear: Wartime London, 1939–1945', *Journal of British Studies* 48, no. 1 (2009).

⁴⁶⁴ Calder, *The People's War*, 263.

⁴⁶⁵ E. G. Selwyn, Dean of Winchester, 16/10/40, R41/114/1.

The BBC took Selwyn's accusation seriously, and internal memos between Director-General Ogilvie and the Music Department, and a subsequent reply to Selwyn from Ogilvie, were sent to confirm that the offending version was composed by Stanford, used at the coronation and in this instance sung by a choir.⁴⁶⁶ Selwyn's letter demonstrates that the ideological symbolism of the national anthem was a sensitive matter, for which respectful treatment was expected by listeners. It is likely that during the uncertainty of wartime such symbolic patriotic music, already rich in historical meaning, personally reassured listeners such as Selwyn who hoped British values continued. This idea is explored further in Chapter 4. Selwyn's sentiment is closely echoed in a letter that protested against similarly disrespectful treatment of the Russian national anthem, written by a listener living in exile from his native country. Vladimir Minorsky, Professor Emeritus at Cambridge University, wrote about a particular experience:

I wish to submit that the record of the Soviet anthem used by the B.B.C. (e.g. after the announcement of the capture of Warsaw at 6 p.m. 17 January) disfigures the character of the original music by transforming a grave hymn into a quick march. What would the British feel if they heard their national anthem played as a waltz? The new Soviet anthem has been in use for over a year and it constantly comes on the Moscow wireless. Would not the musical advisers of the B.B.C. find an appropriate substitute to the unhappy record which wrecks the anthem of an Ally.⁴⁶⁷

His letter illustrates the delicate political implications of musical programming during the Second World War, with particular reference to the ongoing global arena of events, an issue explored further in Chapter 3. The importance of this political element is demonstrated by a preserved apology, which inspired a series of correspondence with the Soviet Embassy regarding instructions for the accurate tempo. The BBC informed Minorsky that although the offending performance had conformed to the recommendations, a more dignified recording had also been made for solemn occasions.⁴⁶⁸ A following letter expressed gratitude for an 'incomparably better' dignified version performed on Red Army Day and granted on behalf of his nation appreciation of the BBC's 'loyal gesture'.⁴⁶⁹

Summary

These letters demonstrate that, as many scholars argue, 'there was no universal audience of music on radio'.⁴⁷⁰ Their individuality demonstrates the fractured, kaleidoscopic variety of tastes

⁴⁶⁶ Reply to Selwyn from Ogilvie, 24/10/40, R41/114/1.

⁴⁶⁷ Prof. Vladimir Minorsky, 17/01/45, R41/114/3.

⁴⁶⁸ Reply to Minorsky, 13/02/45, R41/114/3.

⁴⁶⁹ Minorsky, 03/03/45, R41/114/3.

⁴⁷⁰ Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 221. See also Nicholas, *The Echo of War*; Rose, *Which People's War?*.

that the nationwide audience encompassed. However, the themes within this chapter show a remarkable commonality between the concerns of these listeners that heavily influenced the frameworks through which they positioned their needs in demands, complaints and requests. They knew who they were, where their musical tastes positioned them, and what they wished their everyday experiences of broadcasting to be like. The chapter has argued that these listeners knowingly and willingly exploited the tensions within music broadcasting, such as the altered importance of particular sections of the audience and the increased attention to musical popularity. Doing so allowed them to negotiate their personal position within the nationwide audience and the 'imagined' communities of listeners it encompassed, to attest to the value of their opinions as single listeners in the hope that their opinions did 'weigh in the balance'. Strikingly this extended to a ruthless exploitation of the wartime situation as listeners also referenced the enemy in an attempt to persuade the BBC. It is important to note that despite the evidence of the futility of most of the surviving pleas, thousands of listeners continued to write to the BBC throughout the Second World War.

This chapter has shown that the Second World War affected the experiences of the listeners in significant ways, both practical and ideological. The changing priorities of the wartime BBC greatly altered the scope and content of the musical experiences available to the public and caused a considerable amount of controversy. Although there is no evidence within the letters that wartime changed the listeners' tastes for music, it did enable them to voice their musical needs with certainty, passion and personality within an uneasy environment of musical 'elevated classlessness' that gave increasing power to popular trends in public musical taste. A second important consideration is that World War Two marked an important turning point in the history of listening, for two reasons. It encouraged the BBC to reimagine the listener by delineating and engaging with new audiences previously unconsidered, along divisions of gender and occupation. It also moved the accepted environments and practices of listening beyond the boundaries that had traditionally confined it. This change enabled the wartime listener to grow in power and personality in the eyes of the BBC and perhaps also in their own eyes.

Chapter 3: Lionel Bradley and classical music in wartime London

This chapter is a study of the listening experiences and habits of one dedicated listener, Lionel James Herbert Bradley (1898–1953). Bradley was a prolific listener, who comprehensively recorded his experiences of listening to ‘serious’ music in London. Bradley wrote about his experiences in documents he called ‘bulletins’.⁴⁷¹ These bulletins provide an invaluable source of evidence for understanding the realities of listening to live classical music in wartime London. This chapter examines his experiences within the period October 1936 to September 1946, the first decade in which he wrote bulletins. During this decade, Bradley documented his attendance at 1309 concerts, recitals and opera productions, including 771 events that he recorded during the Second World War.⁴⁷² The value of having such a large source of listening experiences is that they allow the examination of broader trends and patterns in Bradley’s concert-going. However, this chapter is primarily concerned with establishing the nature of his listening practices and experiences, and examining the influence of the war upon them.

This chapter has two parts. The first part introduces Bradley and his bulletins, examines how he listened, and analyses the nature of his listening experiences and bulletins. This section compares Bradley as a listener to the cultural ideals outlined in Chapter 1. The second part analyses his listening experiences in the years leading up to and throughout World War Two. It does so using three methods: firstly, a broader statistical analysis of a decade of his listening from October 1936 to September 1946; secondly, a thematic analysis of his recurring preoccupations as a listener; and thirdly, detailed textual analysis of individual experiences that examines his relationship with music, performers and his listening environments, and questions the influence of the war upon his experiences. This chapter argues that the Second World War had a nuanced but complex effect upon Bradley’s listening experiences and impacted on his relationship with different bodies of repertoire and types of musical experiences.

⁴⁷¹ For example, in booklet LJHB 02/032 (quoted below). It is likely that Bradley chose the term to reflect its dual meanings: a short official statement or broadcast summary of news, or a regular newsletter or report issued by an organisation. See *Oxford English Dictionary* online (accessed 19 March 2018). As such, ‘bulletin’ could refer to either the booklets he constructed or the reports they contain. This chapter uses the term ‘bulletin’ to describe the individual reports. As discussed below, the term has interesting implications for the style, function and information conveyed by his reports.

⁴⁷² This figure encompasses all bulletins between his first wartime concert on 07/10/39 (LJHB 02/039) and his last two before VE day on 07/05/45 (LJHB 02/105).

1. Lionel Bradley and his bulletins

Bradley had two interests, music and ballet, which are reflected in the two archives that preserve his collected writings and papers.⁴⁷³ Bradley's ballet archive is well known and has been studied for several decades; however, thus far very little attention has been given to his concert and opera bulletins.⁴⁷⁴ Interestingly, the division that Bradley maintained between his ballet and concert-going identities reflected his opinion on the lack of public interaction between the two cultures.⁴⁷⁵

Bradley began writing bulletins about his musical experiences in October 1936 after he moved to London. Prior to his move to the capital, Bradley had been educated at Manchester Grammar School and Queen's College, Oxford, and worked at Liverpool University Library between 1924 and 1936, where he was the deputy librarian from 1931.⁴⁷⁶ Bradley lived as a bachelor in Kensington, and was appointed as assistant secretary and sub-librarian at the London Library in 1940, where he worked until his death.⁴⁷⁷ After his move to London, Bradley became well-known as a 'balletomane' and notable ballet supporter, and was publicly active as a writer and ballet scholar.⁴⁷⁸ This public persona presents an interesting contrast to the tone and knowledge he displayed in his music-focused bulletins (see below). In the four years between 1936 and 1940, it is likely that Bradley spent his time attending performances of music and ballet, writing about them, and establishing himself in the ballet scene.⁴⁷⁹ As a music-lover Bradley remained in the private sphere, although the bulletins demonstrate that concert-going was a frequent hobby and

⁴⁷³ The bulletins studied in this chapter are listed in the Introduction and Bibliography. The archive studied here was recently rediscovered and contains his music-related collection, which alongside the bulletins (1936–1953), includes notebooks (1914–1928), lists of broadcasts heard (1939–1953), a calendar of London performances (September 1937 to June 1939), press reports (1951–1953), two lists of operas Bradley attended in his life, and many concert programmes. A second archive exists in the Victoria & Albert Museum Theatre and Performance Archives, and contains Bradley's ballet-related collection, including bulletins and clippings.

⁴⁷⁴ Two papers have been published online by Paul Banks, who discovered the archive: Paul Banks, 'Lionel Bradley: One Man's Britten', http://pwb101.me.uk/?page_id=499 (accessed 24 May 2018); 'Lionel Bradley (1898–1953): A Family History and Biography', http://pwb101.me.uk/?page_id=580 (accessed 24 May 2018). The bulletins were also featured in a BBC Radio 4 Documentary, *One Man's War* (2012), discussed below. 'One Man's War' (BBC Radio 4, 2012).

⁴⁷⁵ For example, in November 1942 Bradley heard a 'strict ballet tempo' performance of the suite from Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, and suggested that 'in spite of the excellence of the performance it was rather tepidly received (perhaps concert audiences don't go to ballet – or ballet audiences to concerts)'. 01/11/42, LJHB 02/075.

⁴⁷⁶ 'Mr. Lionel Bradley', *The Times*, 04/01/54, 8.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.* He also identified himself as a 'balletomane' on 26/10/38, LJHB 02/029. Bradley regularly attended ballet and built a rapport with London's ballet troupes. He wrote about ballet both privately in the ballet bulletins, publicly as a frequent 'fault-finding' letter writer, and professionally as a regular contributor to the magazine *Ballet* (1939; 1946–52), and author of *Sixteen Years of Ballet Rambert* (published 1946). He was also a trustee of the London Archives of the Dance (established 1945). See also Banks, 'Lionel Bradley (1898–1953)'.

⁴⁷⁹ Banks, 'Lionel Bradley (1898–1953)'.

passion. His job at the London Library did little to curtail the frequency of his concert-going, as Table 3.1 demonstrates (see below).

It is striking that despite the scale on which he documented his listening experiences, the bulletins 'offer only oblique insights into his life and personality'.⁴⁸⁰ Unlike Lewis's diaries discussed in Chapter 4, Bradley's bulletins contain only scarce contextual information about his life and personality, unless it detracted from his experience or listening ability. For example, his job is only mentioned as a source of 'habitual if involuntary lateness' to National Gallery recitals.⁴⁸¹ Moreover, as discussed below, it is striking how few of the bulletins contain references to the wartime situation. His fire-watching duties were mentioned only once during the bulletins, when it affected his experience of a National Gallery recital in April 1941:

It was a pity that fire watching duty caused me to miss the first half of this concert, for Eileen Ralph played the final Allegretto of the P. Sonata in D (K576) so well that I was grieved to have missed the first two movements (& besides that the violin sonata in E minor – K.304).⁴⁸²

More surprisingly, the bombing of the London Library on 28 February 1944, which caused significant damage and a six month closure, is not mentioned at all.⁴⁸³ As a result of this lack of autobiographical detail, the picture of Bradley's character as a music-lover presented by his friend Richard Buckle in his obituary is an invaluable source of information about his habits and relationship with his musical experiences:

Bradley took music, opera, and ballet the way other people take opium: he could not have enough. There were too few evenings in the week for him to attend the concerts, to see the performances, and to hear the broadcasts he could not bear to miss. Everything he saw or heard he wrote down.⁴⁸⁴

1.1. The Bradley bulletins

Bradley was systematic about documenting his listening experiences. He recorded them in small, handmade booklets, which assumed a standardised format in 1936 that was maintained throughout the decade. Most of the booklets were titled 'Brief Notes' or 'London Concerts &

⁴⁸⁰ Banks, 'One Man's Britten'.

⁴⁸¹ 21/03/40, LJHB 02/044. Similar complaints occur on 15/04/41, LJHB 02/056, 11/06/41, LJHB 02/058, 25/06/41, LJHB 02/058, 20/01/41, LJHB 02/053 and others.

⁴⁸² 14/04/41, LJHB 02/056. 'Fire watching' was declared compulsory for businesses from January 1941, as a measure to 'guard against incendiaries', and employees were expected to volunteer. Zeigler, *London at War*. 145, 210. Bradley had fire watching duty at the London Library. See 'One Man's War', 25:40–27:00.

⁴⁸³ Bradley attended a Brahms recital at the National Gallery the following lunchtime, whilst, as Banks reports, his colleagues were attempting to rescue surviving books. 29/02/44, LJHB 02/93. See Banks, 'One Man's Britten'.

⁴⁸⁴ Richard Buckle, in 'Mr. Lionel Bradley', *The Times*, 04/01/54, 8.

Opera', and stated the dates covered. Each bulletin was systematically headed by the date and time, location, sponsor of the event, performers and notable repertoire, and Bradley drew a line under each heading and at the bottom of each bulletin to clearly divide them. Although Bradley did not record the time he wrote the bulletins, it is likely that he made them with some immediacy. This is inferred by the regularity of his concert-going, the fact that he commented on newspaper reviews in post-scripts after his bulletins, and that he noted occasions on which time had passed when he was less accurate in his observations (see Chapter 5). The bulletins also briefly contained reports of his experiences of film and theatre between November 1936 and May 1937, and bulletins about broadcasts appeared amongst his concert-going from June 1946.⁴⁸⁵ From 1938, the booklets settled into a pattern. Whereas initial booklets covered only two to twelve events, by 1944 they had gradually expanded in length and regularity to become approximately monthly, each containing twenty or more bulletins. This reflects Bradley's greatly increased concert attendance from the 1942–3 season onwards, as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 provides an overview of the bulletin booklets for the period October 1936 to September 1946. By the 1930s, music-making in London was established into alternating summer and winter 'seasons' of concerts and opera.⁴⁸⁶ Considering the bulletins in terms of seasons makes sense of their advent in October 1936, and of the three annual three-month gaps between June and October in 1937, 1938 and 1939.⁴⁸⁷ During the Second World War, music-making became continuous and the notions of 'seasons' less applicable (see below), as Bradley acknowledged.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁵ Four early bulletin booklets specifically cover theatre and film experiences: numbers 002, 005, 006, and 009. Broadcasts appear from booklet 117. Although these events are included in the figures for the total bulletins of the period, they have not been analysed. Banks suggests that it is possible Bradley continued to report on theatre and film after May 1937, as yet undiscovered. He also argues that the appearance of broadcasts likely corresponded with Bradley's work on his book, and points to a rise in his radio listening that corresponded to the advent of the BBC's Third Programme on 29 September 1946, which predominantly provided serious culture. Banks, 'One Man's Britten'. See also Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years*; Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', 91.

⁴⁸⁶ For example, in the interwar period, orchestral concert-giving 'primarily of concert series during the main season from October to May, presented by the usual organizations' followed by a summer season of Proms concerts. Jennifer Doctor, 'A New Dimension: The BBC Takes on the Proms, 1920–44', in *The Proms: A New History*, ed. Jennifer Doctor and David Wright (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 78. See also McVeigh and Ehrlich, 'The Modernisation of London Concert Life around 1900'; Benjamin Wolf, 'Promoting New Music in London, 1930–1980' (Ph.D. thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2010).

⁴⁸⁷ The regularity of these gaps suggest that Bradley took a purposeful annual break from documenting his concert-going, and perhaps from London. The bulletins for 26/06/37 and 27/06/37, written '4 months afterwards', note that Bradley had undergone an operation in mid-June. LJHB 02/013. He likely spent the summer convalescing, explaining the lengthy gap before he documented these experiences. However the other in 1938 and 1939 are unexplained, although the latter incorporated the month-long hiatus in concert-giving at the outbreak of war (see Chapter 1). In contrast, Banks has suggested that these gaps represent missing bulletins lost in the post. Banks, 'One Man's Britten'.

⁴⁸⁸ For example, in September 1940 Bradley wrote: 'As the summer season of opera at Sadlers Wells ends on Saturday, this may be taken as the end of the 1939 – 1940 music season – tho' the Proms & the National Gallery Concerts are still continuing'. LJHB 02/051. The following August he wrote: 'This may serve as the end of the 1940 – 41 concert season tho' music in London goes on now so continuously that there is no real break between one season & the next'. LJHB 02/059.

However, he retained a practice of framing his experiences within annual seasons that began in September or October and ended after the summer season. During World War Two, he began writing an end of season note, which evolved from a short comment in 1940 and 1941 that noted the most important features of wartime music (see below) to become, from 1942, lengthy ‘retrospections’ that reviewed his year of concert-going.⁴⁸⁹ For example, in 1945 he wrote a twelve-page analysis of the repertoire he had heard and the statistical shortcomings of his attendances at opera, orchestral concert and chamber music (discussed below).⁴⁹⁰

Table 3.1: Distribution of the Bradley bulletins by annual season

Annual Season	Dates of events encompassed	Booklets	Number of bulletins
1936–37	28 October 1936 – 29 June 1937	001–013	72
1937–38	4 October 1937 – 26 June 1938	014–028	103
1938–39	2 October 1938 – 5 June 1939	029–038	95
1939–40	7 October 1939 – 5 September 1940	039–051	90
1940–41	19 September 1940 – 17 August 1941	052–059	57
1941–42	4 September 1941–27 August 1942	060–073	128
1942–43	1 September 1942 –21 August 1943	074–086	177
1943–44	24 August 1943 –6 August 1944	087–097 ⁴⁹¹	170
1944–45	7 August 1944 – 13 September 1945	098–109	214
1945–46	16 September 1945 – 21 September 1946	110–120	203
Total:			1309

As discussed below, there is regular evidence that Bradley used the bulletins as personal reference documents, as he often compared experiences with previous hearings. However, they also had a social purpose, which the following analyses argue mediated their function, content and style. From November 1937, it is evident that Bradley had begun to share his bulletin booklets amongst a circle of friends.⁴⁹² He rapidly adopted a standard layout for the final page of each booklet to assist with efficient distribution, which listed the names and changing addresses of his

⁴⁸⁹ The dates of these notes have been used to define the seasons in Table 3.1. The following sections of this chapter follow Bradley’s division and discuss his concert-going by the seasons he defined.

⁴⁹⁰ LJHB 02/109.

⁴⁹¹ The 1943–44 season contains twelve booklets, as the numbering includes 096 and 096a.

⁴⁹² Booklet for 10–28/11/37, LJHB 02/016. Whether they were circulated before this point is unclear. A note in an earlier bulletin for 14/10/37 suggests that either Bradley began this practice far earlier, or also shared older reports that are not preserved in the archive. He wrote: ‘I don’t really remember the performance last February [1936] at a Courtauld Sargent concert – and my notes on it have not been returned to me’. LJHB 02/014.

recipients. From February 1941 he also provided a space for recording date of receipt, which allowed the booklets' progress to be properly tracked and returned.⁴⁹³ Several booklets also ended with directives about the inefficiency of the distribution process, which suggests that Bradley wanted them swiftly returned, likely so he could use them as a reference resource.⁴⁹⁴ During the period 1936 to 1946, Bradley sent his bulletins to 'a small, informal group of friends some of whom he had met in Manchester, Oxford or Liverpool'.⁴⁹⁵ Eight individuals received the bulletins for different periods: J. L. Wing, Stanley Meyrick, Rex Hillson, Eda Whelan, Ted Lewis, Chris Cooper, Mrs Mann and William Hanna Esq.⁴⁹⁶ Through the recipients, the bulletins travelled across the country to Sheffield, Arnsdale (Southport), Maghull (Liverpool), Manchester, Morecombe, Bury, Birkdale (Southport), Marlborough, R.A.F. Middleton St George (County Durham), Stockport and St Albans. There is no evidence that the recipients knew each other or contributed any material to the bulletin booklets, and it is unclear whether they had any response to them.

1.2. The nature of the bulletins and Bradley's listening experience

This section discusses two interlinked topics: how Bradley listened and how he documented that listening. Through a comparison with audience studies literature, this section firstly establishes a framework for analysing recurring elements that affected his experiences. It also analyses a bulletin from 1941 with reference to the interrelationship of description, evaluation and response, and examines Bradley's linguistic choices. This leads into a discussion of recurring elements that demonstrate Bradley's expectations and habits as a listener and argues that he was deeply encultured within serious highbrow musical society.

Analysis of the bulletins for the seasons 1936 to 1946 reveals that in documenting his experiences, Bradley commonly paid attention to the same elements, which shaped the structure of his reports. The information provided by Bradley can be usefully understood as falling within four main categories, displayed in Table 3.2. These are the listening environment and conditions, the music, the performers and their performance, and Bradley's response. These categories reflect the multi-modal nature of critically aware listening, as discussed in Chapter 1.⁴⁹⁷ The table

⁴⁹³ LJHB 02/053. The dates given indicate it took about six months for this booklet to circulate.

⁴⁹⁴ This appears to have been an almost annual concern, occurring for example, in December 1938, LJHB 02/032; January 1940, 02/042: 'NOTE ON RETURN OF THESE BULLETINS. Some person or persons is (or are) holding on to all the bulletins for the period 14 Mar to 6 June and from 7 October 1939 to date'; and February 1941, 02/054.

⁴⁹⁵ Banks, 'One Man's Britten'.

⁴⁹⁶ For example, Eda Whelan received all the bulletins, whilst in contrast, William Hanna only received one booklet, LJHB 02/105 (10/04/45 to 15/05/45). Banks has uncovered the relationship between Bradley and most of his recipients. For example, Wing had been at Oxford with Bradley, Whelan was a former colleague from Liverpool University Library, and Cooper was part of Bradley's ballet circle. Banks, 'One Man's Britten'.

⁴⁹⁷ See Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening'.

divides the categories into different elements that can be conceptualised as external or internal to Bradley, which reflects the distinction in the following analyses between examining the circumstances of war alongside Bradley's own biases and tastes.

Table 3.2 Elements of Bradley's experiences

Category	External	Internal
Listening environment and conditions	Venue Acoustics Atmosphere Interruptions Alterations Visual aspect Type of event Audience External circumstances	State of mind Preparedness Understanding Motivation for attending Sleepiness Health Tastes
Music	Details of the repertoire Composer Popularity with audience Canonical, little known or first-performance	Familiarity Knowledge Judgement of quality
Performance and performers	Details of the performers Rarity of hearing them Fame Order and length Interpretation	Quality Effect Memorability
Response	Audience response	Intellectual Emotional Spiritual Comparison with previous performances

Many of these elements represent regularly recurring themes that contributed to the structure and content of the bulletins, and they all had the potential to either enhance or detract from his listening. The information in the bulletins encompasses all parts of his experiences, including preparation beforehand and reflection afterwards. Therefore, they demonstrate that for Bradley

listening to music involved a continued engagement before, during and after an event.⁴⁹⁸ This can be represented by a tripartite cyclical process of preparing, listening and documenting, whereby Bradley continually revised his knowledge base and expectations, which in turn affected his experiences.

A striking comparison can be made between the analysis of Bradley's bulletins and listening and findings from empirical music psychology literature (see the Introduction). A number of studies have analysed variables of the listening process and experience, seeking to understand the affective process of listening and the features that are most influential in prompting (emotional) engagement. They offer an interesting conceptual framework for considering the influences on Bradley's experiences and responses, and the manner in which he prepared for, engaged with and documented his experiences. For example, a paper by Au, Ho and Chan examines several studies of audience experience feedback and evaluates the different frameworks constructed to systematically explain the components of experience. These studies focus on 'what goes on in the minds of an audience while they are watching a performance', and what the audience 'make' of an experience.⁴⁹⁹ The paper demonstrates that the studies use linguistically similar, overlapping categories that position the experience of listening within marginally different boundaries. For example, the 'arts audience experience index' proposed by Radbourne *et al.* suggests four components: 'authenticity', which includes the performers' interpretation and presentation; 'collective engagement', encompassing the listeners' engagement with the performers and audience community; 'knowledge', the 'extent to which the audience is satisfied with the intellectual stimulation and cognitive growth derived from the performance'; and 'risk management', whether the audience felt the performance met their expectations, was value for money, and contributed to their identities as listeners.⁵⁰⁰ Additional elements identified by other studies include engagement (or 'captivation') and concentration, learning and challenge ('intellectual stimulation' and 'aesthetic growth'), energy and tension, shared experience and atmosphere ('social bonding'), personal resonance, emotional connection (or 'resonance') and spiritual value.⁵⁰¹

From a different perspective, psychological research on strong experiences of music (SEM) by Karlsen and Gabrielsson traces the relationship of environmental, musical and personal factors that affect listeners' experiences.⁵⁰² Gabrielsson distinguishes between three sets of factors which

⁴⁹⁸ This concept reflects the discussion of the processes of preparing and anticipating, listening and remembering discussed in Burland and Pitts, *Coughing and Clapping*. See also Chapter 4.

⁴⁹⁹ Wing Tung Au, Glos Ho, and Kenson Wing Chuen Chan, 'An Empirical Investigation of the Arts Audience Experience Index', *Empirical Studies of the Arts* 35, no. 1 (2017), 28.

⁵⁰⁰ Four studies authored by Radbourne with Glow, Johanson or White are discussed in *ibid.*, 29–30.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 30–32.

⁵⁰² Karlsen, 'Context, Cohesion and Community'; Gabrielsson, 'Emotions in Strong Experiences with Music'.

have notable correlation to the elements described above in Table 3.2.⁵⁰³ Firstly, 'personal factors': the physical and emotional state of the listener, personality-related variables, and cognitive process of understanding. Secondly, 'situational factors': the physical and social features of the listening situation, venue, special occasions or environments, and the performance conditions (for example, whether well-rehearsed or not). Thirdly, 'musical factors': including the perceived quality of the performance, the skill, concentration and involvement of the musicians, and the structural features of the music itself. Karlsen examines 'contextual factors' and 'intrapersonal factors'.⁵⁰⁴ He describes contextual factors as framing the experience through the event, music, audience and musicians, and mediating the listeners' evaluations and responses. For example, he notes 'well-known music' as a 'mediation characteristic'. Intrapersonal factors include personal preconditions such as musicianship and 'being exposed to something different', the cognitive and emotional process the listener experiences and their resultant affect.

A fourth comparison is provided by Thompson, who discusses the 'determinants of enjoyment' that form the 'affective listening process'.⁵⁰⁵ He evaluates their likelihood of enhancing or detracting from the experience both before and during the performance, with respect to both anticipated and actual enjoyment. For example, he noted familiarity with the performers, repertoire and venue; the social aspect; the listener's mood and motivation; the acoustics of their seat; the concert length; unwelcome distractions; the performers' skills, conviction, interpretation and manner; and how engaging the performance was. There are several interesting recurring components amongst this literature with respect to Bradley. For example, the role of familiarity, difference and memory in shaping response; the distinction between intellectual stimulation and (collective) emotional or spiritual engagement; the effect of venues, acoustics, audiences and distractions; and expectations.

Detailed analysis of a bulletin demonstrates that the different categories of elements in Table 3.2 interacted to form and influence Bradley's experiences and subsequent written representations. On 29 July 1941, Bradley attended a recital at the National Gallery performed by the Rosé String Trio. He wrote

What a splendid man Arnold Rose is! Here he was, nearly 80 years of age, white haired & white bearded, an exile from his country, still keeping bright the flame of Viennese culture & playing with nearly all the old strength & suppleness. His colleagues Ernest Tomlinson (viola) & Friedrich Buxbaum (the ~~original~~ cellist of his quartet as long ago as 1900) were worthy of him & caught fire from his playing. The programme consisted of

⁵⁰³ Gabrielsson, 'Emotions in Strong Experiences with Music', 443–5.

⁵⁰⁴ Karlsen, 'Context, Cohesion and Community'. In particular, see Table 10.1, 118–9.

⁵⁰⁵ Sam Thompson, 'Determinants of Listeners' Enjoyment of a Performance', *Psychology of Music* 31, no. 1 (2007), 22–4.

Mozart's Divertimento in E flat (K563) & Beethoven's String Trio in C minor (op.9 N°3). If I enjoyed the Beethoven more it was possibly because I had to hear the Mozart from the outer room & was distracted by the selfishness & discourtesy of latecomers who crowded against the barrier & pushed through it noisily in the short intervals between the six movements of the Divertimento, so that I almost wished for the end before it was all over. I rather felt, too, to-day that one had lost some of the enchantment of the earlier Mozart without, in this work, reaching the heights of the string quintets. The Beethoven is not a mature work but it is the early work of a master & this superb performance made the most of it.⁵⁰⁶

Several considerations arise here. Firstly, a number of the categories in Table 3.2 are represented in his bulletin. For example, it is evident that the external environmental elements had a significant effect on his experience. He noted his inferior position within the outer room and the effect of the audience's inappropriate behaviour, both of which dramatically shaped his engagement with the music. Descriptions such as 'the selfishness & discourtesy of latecomers' are far from neutral, and yet they also contain factual information about concert-going of the period. Bradley's interest in appropriate audience etiquette is interesting because it demonstrates that he was an encultured listener, who valued the practices of the period that sought to provide 'ideal' listening conditions. As noted in Chapter 1, by the twentieth century, there was a well-established expected standard of audience behaviour cultivated at serious music events, particularly at highbrow chamber recitals.⁵⁰⁷ As discussed below, Bradley regularly attended such events,⁵⁰⁸ and would have been familiar as a regular concert-goer with the expectations invested in listeners at musical events more widely. During the interwar period, populist concert series such as the Proms were also attempting to encourage the same standards of respect amongst 'casual listeners'.⁵⁰⁹ As discussed in Chapter 5, the National Gallery concerts were celebrated for their populist atmosphere, and it is notable that Bradley emphasised this example of disrespect, which contrasts so significantly with the dominant ideological image of rapt, well-behaved audiences.

Another prominent category as identified in Table 3.2 is the consideration he gives to the performers, in particular his evocative description and celebration of Arnold Rosé. This demonstrates that he was visually as well as aurally invested in the experience. Rosé was a

⁵⁰⁶ 29/07/41, LJHB 02/059.

⁵⁰⁷ See also Bashford, 'Learning to Listen'; Botstein, 'Listening through Reading'.

⁵⁰⁸ For example, before the Second World War he attended several London Contemporary Music Centre (LCMC) concerts that promoted first-performances of contemporary, often modernist repertoire (see below). See Doctor, *The BBC and Ultra-Modern Music, 1922–1936*, 69, 73–4, 418, 444.

⁵⁰⁹ For example, Langley discusses how 'audience behaviour warnings' were displayed at Proms concerts in the interwar period in programmes and on signs Leanne Langley, 'Building an Orchestra, Creating an Audience: Robert Newman and the Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts, 1895–1926', in *The Proms: A New History*, ed. Jennifer Doctor and David Wright (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 42.

celebrated Jewish Austrian violinist who had fled Vienna for Britain in 1938 following the death of his wife, where he continued to perform until 1945.⁵¹⁰ The expressive imagery with which he portrays Arnold Rosé, highlighting his vitality and zeal in spite of his exile, age and appearance conveys a notable message about the value of Viennese musical heritage within a wartime context. For example, the metaphors of 'flame' and 'fire' convey an ideological message, suggesting that he perceived Viennese culture to be an inspirational flame, carried through the musical performance of Mozart by a celebrated and skilled performer of the same heritage.⁵¹¹ This demonstrates two things: firstly, that the political context was introducing Bradley to musicians he would not otherwise have had a chance to hear, and secondly, that Bradley was consciously relating his experience to his awareness of these circumstances.⁵¹² The level of descriptive detail he provided on the other performers is also striking. It is noteworthy that Bradley crossed out the word 'original' in his description of the Trio, which implies that he wished his accounts to be factually accurate, and had likely checked this reference.⁵¹³ The prominence given to Rosé (and the influence of the audience) suggests that not only that this was a significant event for the encounter, but that his engagement with the experience was prompted more by the extra-musical elements than the music itself.⁵¹⁴ It is possible that he included this detail for the benefit of his friends to whom the bulletins were sent. However, the absence of any direct mention of his response to the performance is typical of the bulletins as a whole.

Secondly, it demonstrates that his descriptive and evaluative components of Bradley's bulletins were often inextricably intertwined at the linguistic level as well as in terms of the overall structure, effect and message of the account. His linguistic choices and evocative references demonstrate a strength of feeling that underset his response, which indicates that this was a carefully constructed account. This suggests that his process of making sense of his experiences was complex, and that he constructed the bulletins with a clear, considered idea of his impressions and opinions. In this, there is an interesting comparison to the style of Frank Lewis's diaries, which Chapter 4 argues were a more spontaneous product of emotional engagement.⁵¹⁵ It is also interesting to see how the influence of different elements on the listening experience is

⁵¹⁰ See Carmen Ottner, 'Rosé [Rosenblum], Arnold (Josef)', *Grove Music Online* (accessed 12 January 2017).

⁵¹¹ Bradley regularly made a correlation between composers and performer's musical heritages, as an enhancing feature of his experience.

⁵¹² Banks suggested this was a significant impact of the Second World War on Bradley's experiences in 'One Man's War', 19:35–22:20.

⁵¹³ See below regarding his use of reference literature. Ottner's account suggests this was still incorrect, and that Buxbaum was a member from 1905. Ottner, 'Rosé [Rosenblum], Arnold (Josef)', *Grove Music Online*.

⁵¹⁴ Karlsen makes a similar observation in his study. Karlsen, 'Context, Cohesion and Community', 116–7. Banks also notes that Bradley was 'honest about the external factors that influence[d] his listening'. Banks, 'One Man's Bitten'.

⁵¹⁵ However, as explored below, the differences between them also point to significant encultured listening and linguistic behaviours.

manifested in the linguistic style and terminology Bradley used to convey his meaning to his audience.

A third consideration is that this bulletin demonstrates that Bradley was confident as a listener in his ability to make connections and evaluate both the music and the performance. It indicates that he had a good knowledge of both Mozart and Beethoven's chamber repertoires. This assertion is repeatedly supported in the following sections. For example, there are many instances in which the evaluative judgements of music show that Bradley was opinionated about musical quality, employed a clear hierarchy to describe the value of music, and was deeply influenced by his personal tastes and biases.⁵¹⁶ He was also confident in making connections between different composers.⁵¹⁷ For example, by 1943 Bradley was frequently using the term 'café music' to qualify his evaluations of light music, in particular Dvořák's music. Moreover, he used this as a standard against which to judge other repertoire: on 15 September 1943 he heard the London Belgian Piano Quintet perform Jongen's Piano Quartet in E flat (op. 23) at the National Gallery. He described the work as 'luscious' and wrote

Not that I would stigmatize the composer as a Belgian Dvořák. He strikes me as a talented musician who lacks the economy of genius. It isn't a first class work but it is musicianly [*sic.*] & true chamber music not a series of pretty tunes for cafe orchestra. The scherzo had something of the lightness of a Frank Bridge (if not of Mendelssohn). And by comparing him with Frank Bridge I intend a compliment.⁵¹⁸

Similarly, on 10 May 1945, he heard the Griller Quartet perform Bax's String Quartet No.1 in G at the Chelsea Music Club. He disliked Bax ('Why is it that I can find so little to enjoy in this composer's music? Is there nothing there? Or is it just obstinacy on my part that makes me unable to accept it') and described the quartet with the judgement: 'In the first movement I felt as tho' I was in a Bohemian café that had run out of Dvorak (& longed for the distractions of cream cakes & coffee), the second movement was more soothing & sent me to sleep'.⁵¹⁹

As a collection, the bulletins support the assertion that Bradley was an attentive, critical listener, or to apply one of Frith's categories, a 'serious' listener.⁵²⁰ This suggests that he closely identified with and reflected the cultural expectations of listening that the serious music establishment had long valued as 'proper' listening (see Chapter 1). Moreover, there is a remarkable similarity between his listening and reporting process and the concept proposed by Nicholls, Hall and

⁵¹⁶ This draws comparison with Calvocoressi's description of himself as a critic 'with peremptory, uncompromising opinions, [and] not a few prejudices'. Calvocoressi, 'How I Listen to Music—V'. See also Chapter 5.

⁵¹⁷ This point is examined further in Chapter 5.

⁵¹⁸ 15/09/43, LJHB 02/088.

⁵¹⁹ 10/05/45, LJHB 02/105.

⁵²⁰ Frith, 'More Than Meets the Ear'.

Forgasz of a serious ‘amateur listener’.⁵²¹ They describe the emergence of amateur listening in the Victorian period as a ‘cultural phenomenon’; these listeners were adept at articulating their ideas about music, had the ability to listen attentively, and saw these practices as serious ‘cultural pastimes’.⁵²² Moreover, they argue that such listeners embodied particular cultural values and a knowledge of the conventional ‘language of response and evaluation’.⁵²³ Similarly, Banks argues that Bradley was ‘a highly informed individual on the boundary’ between two musical communities, professional critics and ‘ordinary members of the concert-going public’.⁵²⁴ An important part of this intermediary, encultured position was that Bradley was a frequent concert-goer. As Table 3.1 demonstrates he attended a vast number of concerts annually, alongside the ballet. Moreover, as suggested above, it is likely that his public position as a ballet writer, and the existence of an audience for the bulletins lent the language and approach of his music reports an air of semi-professionalism. This idea is explored further in Chapter 5 with respect to the similarities between the bulletins and wartime professional reviews.

The bulletins also present evidence that Bradley liked to practise ‘informed listening’, which enabled him to provide such depth of peripheral detail.⁵²⁵ As their moniker implies, the bulletins were constructed by Bradley as systematic reports, and as a collection they demonstrate that he was primarily concerned with recording information about, and evaluations of, the music, musicians and performance. As such his bulletins are rich in peripheral data, and generally provide detailed contextual information on the location, performers, music, and performance. Many bulletins record the process of research and reference with which he informed both the bulletins and his listening. They suggest that he used a library of resources, which included reference literature,⁵²⁶ programme notes and records,⁵²⁷ and reviews (see Chapter 5). It is likely that access

⁵²¹ Nicholls, Hall, and Forgasz, ‘Charting the Past’, 9.

⁵²² *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵²³ Botstein, ‘Listening through Reading’, 139.

⁵²⁴ Banks, ‘One Man’s Britten’.

⁵²⁵ See Chapter 1. As such, they provide an interesting comparison with Britten’s accounts of listening, analysed in Brown, ‘Analysing Listening Experiences’. Brown demonstrates the variety of Britten’s accounts, which in contrast to Bradley’s varied in their peripheral detail.

⁵²⁶ The use of literature and records to enhance musical appreciation and knowledge is discussed in Chapter 1. See also Nicholls, Hall, and Forgasz, ‘Charting the Past’. For example, on 04/10/38 Bradley attended a LCMC recital at the Cowdray Hall and heard repertoire by Badings, Maconchy, Honnegger and Veress performed by the Hungarian String Quartet. He began his bulletin ‘Two of to-night’s composers are not in Cobbett (or other dictionaries) & I have no information about them. Perhaps they are Hungarian’. LJHB 02/029. Although it was unclear to which two composers he referred, they were respectively of Dutch, English and Swiss nationalities. His assumption of Hungarian nationality supports the assertion that Bradley regularly expected connections between the nationality performers and the repertoire they chose. A second example describes how information was important for him to contextualise his experience. On 14/01/39 Bradley went to a Wolf recital at the Wigmore Hall by the celebrated singer Elena Gerhardt and wrote: ‘my heart did sink at first to see her looking so much older, with hollow lines by the nose & mouth. And yet she is not more than 55 (The three reference books which I have looked at vary between 1883 & 1886 as to the date of her birth)’. LJHB 02/033. (Gerhardt was born in 1883).

⁵²⁷ Many bulletins make comparison with recorded versions to which he was accustomed. For example, ‘I thought I knew something about Walton’s Symphony from the records. But to-night very little sounded

to this information was a significant component in his ability to convey details of the performers and music he heard. It is also likely that he used his own bulletins as a reference resource.⁵²⁸ For example, on 27 May 1938 he heard Toscanini conduct Verdi's *Te Deum* and *Requiem*. He wrote

I don't think I have heard the Te Deum before and it didn't make much impression on me except as being an effective piece of choral writing. The Requiem is another matter. I have heard it 4 or 5 times the most recent being the Halle in Nov. 1933 (Sir Henry Wood) and March 1936 (Beecham). It wasn't so familiar however as I had expected. And unfortunately I had a headache & a general feeling of dullness. Moreover, the BBC programme (which for the "Festival" costs 1/- instead of the normal 6d) very shamefully contained no more than a general three-page introduction by Francis Tovey and the bare words of the two works. And it didn't occur to me till afterwards that I ought to have taken the fifth volume of Tovey with me.⁵²⁹

His bulletin demonstrates that knowledge of previous experiences, programmes and Tovey analyses were useful resources for him, particularly when his own critical abilities were lacking (demonstrating an example of the category from Table 3.2 of 'internal' listening conditions). Unfortunately, Bradley did not elaborate on which Tovey volume he meant, or why it would have been a helpful resource. This example also demonstrates that expected familiarity with the music was an important and influential consideration in his listening and response.⁵³⁰ Another interesting component of his preparation is demonstrated by his regular annoyance at the effect of altered programmes, which intersected with his anticipation of particular works. The bulletins demonstrate that repertoire was a strong motivator for Bradley in the choices he made about attending events, and the way he listened, which was shaped by his intention to make critical comparisons between performances.⁵³¹

familiar'. 26/10/38, LJHB 02/029. Similarly, on 25/02/37, a performance of Rimsky-Korsakov's 'romantically tuneful Night of May overture [...] hadn't quite the force of Kajanus's recorded version', whilst 'an outstanding performance of Eventyr which in the flesh attracted me much more than the records in the first Delius album – but perhaps I haven't played it often enough'. LJHB 02/010. Moreover, two bulletins mention his historical relationship with records as a listening resource. Both recount his relationship with his first chamber music record of Beethoven's String Quartet No.2 (Columbia, 1926) which 'has a very particular place in my history and I love it only this side of idolatry [...] For weeks on end I played it every-night before beginning my homework'. 15/11/38, LJHB 02/031. Over two years later on 23/01/41 he mentioned the record again, noting that it was 'my own old favourite of 25 years ago (when I played an abbreviated recording every night for weeks)'. LJHB 02/053.

⁵²⁸ In particular for comparisons with respect to familiarity. For example, on 01/11/42 he heard Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor, 'the most familiar & popular of all' the repertoire, 'which I have not heard for a long time, tho', by my records, it was the first concerto I ever heard (in Dec. 1915 with the infant Solomon as soloist – he was then aged 12)'. LJHB 02/075. This is another example of rare autobiographical detail.

⁵²⁹ 27/05/38, LJHB 02/025.

⁵³⁰ With notable similarity with the audience research literature surveyed above.

⁵³¹ For example, on 03/02/42 Bradley the 'positive menace' of the 'regularity with which programmes are played in the reverse order from that announced the weekly lists'. On this occasion Bradley had planned for being late, and found to his 'extreme annoyance' that he had missed the beginning of Brahms's

A second example is illustrative more of his relationship with modern music than his reliance on reference literature. On 4 June 1943, Bradley heard the LPO Wind Ensemble perform Matyas Seiber's *Serenade for Wind Instruments* (1925) at the National Gallery: 'a name quite new to me & one which I have not succeeded in finding in any work of reference'.⁵³² This bulletin is also notable because he observed the audience's behaviour and evaluated his own opinions to the work:

I expect it was the modernity of the work, rather than the lateness of the hour which caused the audience to stream out during its performance. It is true that there were a number of combinations of notes which would have seemed startling & perhaps distasteful to Mendelssohn but I found the whole work, lively & stimulating

Given what has been proposed about Bradley's listening practices and evaluative skills, this bulletin is also important because it demonstrates something of his musical literacy, particularly given that he admitted he had no reference information. For example, the phrase 'combination of notes' suggests that he lacked a basic musical terminology, although he qualified his account by reference to Mendelssohn.⁵³³ There is an important distinction therefore between the knowledge of composers, repertoires and period-appropriate musical style Bradley demonstrated, which was based on information he could have gained from his reference resources, and a technical knowledge and understanding of music. This is particularly remarkable given that his bulletins portray a willingness to experience contemporary, often modernist, music.⁵³⁴

There are two connected points to make here with respect to Bradley's knowledge and the way he listened and experienced music in different contexts. These are illustrated by three examples. The first two relate to Bradley's 'technical knowledge' of music. Firstly, on 20 July 1943, Bradley heard a performance of Bach's *Art of Fugue* at the National Gallery, and wrote:

'magnificent' String Quartet in G. LJHB 02/066. Similarly, on 01/04/43 Bradley had 'particularly wanted to hear' Schumann's *Dichterliebe* sung by Jan van der Gucht, 'in order to compare his performance the recent one by Peter Pears'. However, the order of the programme had been revised and he missed all but two of the songs, which he described as 'rather annoying' as he was unable to make a 'valid comparison'. LJHB 02/081.

⁵³² 04/06/43, LJHB 02/083.

⁵³³ Another example in which his linguistic choices suggest he was uncomfortable in his technical knowledge is the bulletin for the 04/10/38 LCMC concert noted above. He described Maconchy's String Quartet No.3: 'it begins as a dirge which soon turns into a squabble. Then the first violin tries to sing but the squabble continues only more peaceably'. He also wrote of Veress's String Quartet No.2 'by this time my ears had been battered too much for me to retain in my mind any even pictorial description of what I heard'. LJHB 02/029.

⁵³⁴ This perhaps suggests that Bradley was to some extent a 'self-improving' listener, seeking to enhance his listening abilities through exposure to unconventional repertoire. See Chapter 2.

The performance seemed to me a very good one. As for the work I have not the technical knowledge to appreciate the subtleties of its construction but just surrendered myself to the enjoyment of it as pure sound and pattern weaving.⁵³⁵

There are three notable points to this bulletin. Firstly, this brief comment was all he wrote about the occasion, which contrasts with the longer bulletins that resulted when he adopted a critical approach. Secondly, this is a strikingly different mode of listening, which draws notable parallels with the discussion of 'surrender' to musical enjoyment in Chapter 1.⁵³⁶ Moreover, the notion of 'pure sound and pattern weaving' has an interesting correlation to Nichols' 'How I Listen to Music' article, in which he identified four types of listeners: '(a) those for whom music is pure sound-pattern; (b) those for whom music builds a combination of tonal constructions in mass [...] (c) those in whom music produces emotional reverie accompanied by colour-flights and/or 'pictures'; (d) those for whom music is a sort of action with the development of which they become identified'.⁵³⁷ Nichols argued that most people listened in a mixture of ways, which was evidently true for Bradley. Nichols believed himself to listen in every mode except (a).⁵³⁸ However, it is notable that the bulletins do not suggest that Bradley's predominant critical mode of listening correlates with Nichols's other types. Bradley made a similar assessment of Hindemith's *Ludus Tonalis* on 26 March 1945, which he described as 'a very interesting experience':

At the best of times such a work is far beyond my musical understanding, such as it is, & today I suffered from the double handicap of missing the opening, owing to involuntary lateness & not being able to get hold of a programme until the concert was over. [...] I have no doubt that the work is of absorbing technical interest but apart from that side which I am not competent to comprehend, it has real musical value for the listener & the use of the interludes overcomes any feeling of aridity or academicism.⁵³⁹

Again, there are several notable points here about the way Bradley listened. Firstly, as with several of the examples above, this entry demonstrates how interconnected the elements of his experience were. For example, two environmental elements (the lateness and lack of programme) combined with his lack of technical understanding to affect his experience. Secondly, it is notable that he considered the work to be a valuable listening experience even without this type of musical appreciation. Thirdly, it is notable that he had 'no doubt' that the work was technically interesting as well. This suggests that his opinion was either influenced by the programme notes (or perhaps a review), or that he was consciously assuming so to off-set his musical ignorance.

⁵³⁵ 20/07/43, LJHB 02/085.

⁵³⁶ See in particular Wilenski, 'How I Listen to Music-II'.

⁵³⁷ Robert Nichols, 'How I Listen to Music-IV'.

⁵³⁸ Notably, Nichols argued at he was 'deepest in the music when (d) takes charge'. *Ibid.*

⁵³⁹ 26/03/45, LJHB 02/104.

Although he was honest about his abilities, this does suggest he was positioning them against his knowledge more widely, perhaps for the benefit of his audience of recipients.

The final example demonstrates the difference between Bradley's listening and writing when he was aware of the repertoire and his descriptions when he was unable to recognise it. On 13 February 1939 Bradley heard the Kolisch Quartet perform at a 'Monday Pops' concert. He wrote:

Of course the Kolisch are pre-eminent in modern works & Berg's Lyrical Suite was given magnificently. It is a strange & fascinating work & to hear it on the gramophone can give no idea of how in actual performance both players and audience are rapt away. The sheer mastery & unanimity of their playing is doubtless helped by the fact that they know their repertoire well enough to use no music. But it does look at little odd to see no lights & no music-stands. Moreover the leader, being left handed, sits on the right.

There was great enthusiasm at the end to which they responded with an encore. It was something I knew very well but for the life of me I couldn't say what or by whom. All I knew was that I had never heard it played so well before. If I do find out, later, will my lack of recognition or memory be shameful! [It was Schubert's Quartetsatz in C minor].⁵⁴⁰

This bulletin draws together some of the themes of this section. It demonstrates his knowledge of performers and repertoire, and critical ability to evaluate the quality of the performance. It also demonstrates the connectivity of different elements as they came together to form the 'whole' experience. Particularly notable is the distinction he drew between gramophone and live listening, which demonstrates the important influence of the live, collective engagement of the audience in enhancing his experience. This example also indicates the importance of the visual component in the way he represented his experience. The final section of his bulletin is also striking because it displays the different extents in his critical ability as a listener. Or perhaps more likely, it demonstrates how he constructed his bulletins as careful, considered reports that made use of factual peripheral information to convey a sense of accuracy and authority. It also shows that he was honest in his bulletins about his abilities as a listener, and supports the assertion that he wrote the bulletins with some immediacy, or at least before he learnt of the identity of the encore.⁵⁴¹ An interesting conclusion therefore, is that despite the wealth of resources Bradley had and used, when listening on his own merits he did not have an especially competent aural memory.⁵⁴²

Analysis of the bulletins studied in this section suggest that for Bradley listening was a complex activity that involved attention, observation and preparation. The experiences were influenced by

⁵⁴⁰ 13/02/19, LJHB 02/034. Square brackets original.

⁵⁴¹ A potential source for this information would have been the concert reviews. See Chapter 5.

⁵⁴² Banks has drawn a similar conclusion, see Banks, 'One Man's Britten'.

a variety of factors, and had a notable relationship with his knowledge and abilities as a listener. The next section provides an interesting comparison to this conclusion by examining occasions on which the ideal circumstances were altered by external, wartime influences. As discussed in Chapter 1, Herbert argues that listening involves fluctuating consciousness of five 'interacting variables', attention, awareness, visual stimuli, changes in thought, and perceptions of time.⁵⁴³ The variety and volume of extra-musical detail in the bulletins studied in this section certainly supports the notion that Bradley practised a type of listening that was ideally attentive, but equally focused on the wider (visual) spectacle of live music. As such, Bradley's listening could be characterised as an example of 'wavering' listening, or a heteronomous 'distributed, fluctuating attentional awareness and multimodal focus'.⁵⁴⁴ This provides an interesting contrast to the more aurally focused, autonomous types of attentive listening discussed in Chapter 1 with respect to the BBC's idealised models and the actual practice of Wilenski and Nichols as listeners.⁵⁴⁵

2. Bradley's listening in wartime

This section examines Bradley's listening experiences within the context of wartime and aims to examine the extent to which they were influenced by the Second World War. It begins with an overview of the major trends in his musical experiences for the 1936 to 1946 seasons. These patterns have been drawn from a statistical analysis of his attendances that examine genre, venues and ensembles. This section then considers bulletins from different wartime periods that noticeably unsettled musical life in London, such as the initial months of war and the three periods of bombing,⁵⁴⁶ and examines the primary material effects on Bradley's concert-going habits. It also analyses when and why Bradley mentioned the wartime situation, with particular reference to when he used it as an ideological framework to convey the significance of his experience. Finally, it considers some of the more significant encounters he had with repertoire during this period.

The most important acknowledgement is that the vast majority of Bradley's wartime bulletins do not directly reference the ongoing war. It is particularly striking that he only mentioned bombing twice throughout the war, during the V-weapons campaign in 1944 (discussed below). The Blitz was not directly mentioned at all. Moreover, he did not document the destruction of the Queen's Hall until 3 August 1941, in a passing comment that noted he had not attended an orchestral concert 'since the middle of April'.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴³ Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening'.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.* See also Szendy, *Listen*, 104, 122.

⁵⁴⁵ See Chapter 1. Wilenski, 'How I Listen to Music—II'; Robert Nichols, 'How I Listen to Music—IV'.

⁵⁴⁶ See Chapter 1.

⁵⁴⁷ 03/08/41 LJHB 02/059.

His experiences were all inherently set within a wartime landscape that influenced and mediated almost every aspect of his concert-going. However, as many of the examples in the preceding section demonstrate, most of the wartime bulletins presented his experience within the conventions he had established for his bulletins.

2.1. Patterns in Bradley's concert-going

Three tables provide an overview of the dominant trends in Bradley's attendances between October 1936 and September 1946. Table 3.3 shows the division of his attendance between orchestral concerts, chamber music recitals, and opera.⁵⁴⁸ Table 3.4 presents ten venues he attended most frequently, and Table 3.5 presents the ten ensembles that he heard most frequently. These tables are not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of his concert going. However, they show some of the primary physical means by which the Second World War influenced and altered his concert-going habits.

As also acknowledged by Wolf, there is a surprising lack of literature on the classical music industry of the 1930s and 1940s.⁵⁴⁹ There are several histories of individual organisations,⁵⁵⁰ and several of the iconic institutions (such as the National Gallery concerts) are regularly mentioned in wider histories of the period.⁵⁵¹ However, there are no surveys of the sponsors and organisations that provided concert and opera series on a regular basis either before or during World War Two, and more widely a surprising lack of information about concert series Bradley attended.⁵⁵² During the 1930s, classical music was primarily supported by a system of patronage, with was provided by a variety of individuals and organisations, including the BBC and RPS. Private patrons supported a 'salon culture' of recitals, as well as symphonic endeavours.⁵⁵³ For example 'concert clubs' such as the Courtauld-Sargent series offered an annual season from October to April of six orchestral concerts.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁴⁸ 'Orchestral concerts' and 'chamber music' are intended as loose categories. They respectively include large orchestras, chamber orchestras and string orchestras; and vocal and instrumental recitals and chamber music ensembles. These figures do not include the film, theatre and broadcasts he documented, or the small amount of choral music Bradley began to attend from 1940, which occurred in both orchestral and chamber environments. The categories broadly correspond to Bradley's own categories in his retrospections: in his 'Retrospect of the Season 1943–44' he analysed his attendance at 'large' and 'small' orchestras, and 'chamber music, recitals and songs'. LJHB 02/109.

⁵⁴⁹ Wolf, 'Promoting New Music in London, 1930–1980', 16–26.

⁵⁵⁰ For example, Ehrlich, *First Philharmonic*; Morrison, *Orchestra*; Doctor and Wright, *The Proms: A New History*.

⁵⁵¹ Such as Calder, *The People's War*; Zeigler, *London at War, 1939–1945*; MacKay, *Half the Battle*. See also Chapters 1 and 5.

⁵⁵² Such as the Chelsea Music Club, held at Chelsea Town Hall.

⁵⁵³ Wolf, 'Promoting New Music in London, 1930–1980', 28.

⁵⁵⁴ Percy A. Scholes, *The Mirror of Music: 1844–1944: A Century of Musical Life in Britain as Reflected in the Pages of the Musical Times*, 2 vols. (London: Novello & Company, 1947), 202, 458. Bradley attended 23 of these concerts before the series ended in 1940.

Table 3.3 Distribution of Bradley's attendance at live events by genre, 1936–1946 seasons

Genre	Total attendance 1936–1946 seasons	Attendance by calendar year (Oct 1936 to Sep 1946)										
		1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
Orchestral concerts	328	6	43	45	44	21	21	33	26	25	47	17
Chamber music	738	5	21	35	23	28	64	88	151	125	145	53
Opera	163	4	16	25	13	17	6	8	17	12	23	22
Total:	1229											

Table 3.3 demonstrates that before the outbreak of war, Bradley attended a fairly balanced mixture of orchestral concerts, chamber music recitals, and operas. Although he attended more orchestral concerts, the proportions were more evenly distributed than those from 1942 to 1945. As Table 3.1 above also suggests, there was similarly a dramatic increase in his overall concert-going that began after his first year of bulletins, which suggests he was settling into a routine of ballet and concert attendance. Table 3.3 demonstrates that the most evident change during this decade of musical experiences was that Bradley attended an increasing amount of chamber music from 1941, which also came to represent a greater proportion of his total attendances. The figures for his concert-going during the three periods of bombing are also revealing. During the Blitz, Bradley wrote only thirty-eight bulletins, and only nine in the last four months of 1940, although as discussed below he did not attribute this to the bombing.⁵⁵⁵ However, during the four months of the Little Blitz (21 January to 29 May 1944) he wrote sixty-two bulletins; and during the nine and a half months of V-weapons bombing (13 June 1944 to 27 March 1945), he wrote 145. The latter figure suggests that Bradley had established a routine of concert-going by this stage, which he maintained despite the danger of daytime bombing.

⁵⁵⁵ This figure encompasses 07/09/40 to 11/05/41, booklets 02/051 to 02/057.

Table 3.4 Distribution of Bradley's attendance at venues, 1936–1946 seasons

Venue	Total attendance 1936–1946 seasons	Attendance by calendar year (Oct 1936 to Sep 1946)											
		1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	
Queen's Hall	116	7	34	30	20	15	10						
Covent Garden	20	4	9	5	1							1	
Chelsea Music Club (Town Hall)	32	4	3	10	2						8	5	
Wigmore Hall	127		8	9	6	5	2	10	30	16	30	11	
Sadler's Wells Theatre	83		7	18	9	14					8	27	
Cambridge Theatre	46		3	11	7		7	9	3	1	3	2	
New Theatre	23		1				4	3	11	4			
National Gallery	561				5	26	59	87	134	113	106	31	
RAH	80						4	14	10	13	31	8	
King's Theatre, Hammersmith	10								1	2	7		
Other venues	211	4	28	23	30	10	5	8	10	16	32	45	
Total:	1309												
Top 10 venues:	1098												

Wartime changed the nature and availability of live music, as organisations struggled to survive.⁵⁵⁶ The bulletins continually document the effect that wartime had on the patterns of Bradley's concert-going habits. Some of the concert series Bradley had regularly attended, such as the London Theatre Concerts at the Cambridge Theatre, were curtailed by the advent of war. Others, such as the RPS orchestral concerts remained a constant feature of this decade.⁵⁵⁷ As discussed below, however, Bradley's concert-going habits were dramatically changed and shaped by the

⁵⁵⁶ See Morris, 'Battle for Music'. The economic history of concert provision during the Second World War is complex, and well-documented in a number of sources, particularly those that examine advent of state patronage for serious music. For example, see Weingärtner, *The Arts as a Weapon of War*; Wolf, 'Promoting New Music in London, 1930–1980'; Guthrie, 'Music and Cultural Values in 1940s Britain'.

⁵⁵⁷ Bradley attended 39 RPS concerts across the decade, although the frequency varied: for example, he attended 6 in 1938 and 7 in 1941, but only 1 in both 1943 and 1945.

National Gallery lunchtime recitals instituted by Myra Hess in October 1939, held five days a week through the Second World War.⁵⁵⁸ The dominance of the National Gallery concerts is clearly demonstrated by Table 3.4.⁵⁵⁹ Strikingly, he attended a rather smaller figure in the first year of the concerts, which he attributed primarily to the counter-attraction of lunch-time ballet at the Arts Theatre.⁵⁶⁰

Table 3.4 demonstrates some of the important changes that the Second World War had caused for musical life in London. An important factor in Bradley's bulletins was the destruction of the Queen's Hall in May 1941 (see Chapter 1), which dramatically changed the environment of large orchestral concerts, as they moved to the RAH. Other ensembles were also rehomed: for example, Sadler's Wells Opera found temporary new homes in the New Theatre (reflected in Table 3.4), and later the Prince's Theatre; the LPO moved to the Coliseum.⁵⁶¹ It is notable that Bradley attended events at a further sixty named venues.⁵⁶² An interesting component of the peripheral data that the bulletins convey relates to Bradley's ongoing preoccupation with providing the details of his listening environments. For example, the first two years of bulletins give details of the layouts, comfort, location and acoustics of a number of venues he encountered. These included Chelsea Town Hall, where he attended Chelsea Music Club concerts;⁵⁶³ 23 Cromwell Road, the location of Georg van Harten's Bach concerts;⁵⁶⁴ Cowdray Hall, where the London Contemporary Music Centre held their concerts;⁵⁶⁵ and the renovated Cambridge Theatre, where he attended the London Theatre Concerts series.⁵⁶⁶ He also discussed the Queen's Hall on his first experience of the venue, and following its renovation in 1937.⁵⁶⁷ Notably, Bradley continued this practice during the Second World War as the National Gallery concerts moved between their main location in the octagonal gallery, the air-raid shelter during the Blitz, and the

⁵⁵⁸ See Morris, 'Battle for Music', 36–8.

⁵⁵⁹ A notable element of the attraction for Bradley was the provision of sandwiches. For example, in his note for the end of the 1940–41 season, he noted 'I am not likely to hear another concert before the middle of September since the snack bar at the National Gallery is to be closed for the next fortnight and that rather precludes my attendance'. LJHB 02/059.

⁵⁶⁰ On 27/12/40 Bradley described it as 'rather shocking that I have not been to any concert at the National Gallery for more than three months'. He noted that 'air raid shelter in which they are now given is not so attractive (nor, I think, acoustically so good) as the original habitat under the dome', and the advantage of sandwiches at the ballet. Moreover, he noted 'one can slip in quietly after a ballet has begun, tho' one might hesitate to do so during, say, a string quartet', a comment with notable implications for his attention to 'discourteous' latecomers in the Rosé example above. LJHB 02/052. He made similar observations in his note on the end of the series in April 1946, LJHB 02/116.

⁵⁶¹ Zeigler, *London at War*, 147, 192.

⁵⁶² Including venues in Manchester (1938–9), Paris (1938) and Sheffield (1944–5). Alongside this were 13 unnamed venues. These figures also do not include the broadcasts documented in 1946.

⁵⁶³ 20/11/36, LJHB 02/003.

⁵⁶⁴ 21/10/37, LJHB 02/014.

⁵⁶⁵ Bradley described the hall and the audience: 'In contrast with most musical audiences this seemed to consist of people who looked both intelligent and happy'. 05/10/37, LJHB 02/014.

⁵⁶⁶ 02/10/38, LJHB 02/029.

⁵⁶⁷ 29/06/36, LJHB 02/029 and 06/10/37, 02/14.

basement during the 1944–5 bombing.⁵⁶⁸ Moreover, although he attended eighty events at the RAH from 1941, Bradley regularly complained about the venue's acoustics, which affected his ability to listen critically and make comparisons.⁵⁶⁹ Notably, Bradley did not go to his first Prom until 1942, a year after they had moved to the RAH, an event he attended in order to hear the now famous first performance of Shostakovich's 'Leningrad' Symphony, No.7.⁵⁷⁰

Table 3.5 demonstrates that the LPO and Sadler's Wells were the dominant organisations that Bradley attended during the Second World War. Both organisations struggled to survive throughout the war, which suggests that Bradley actively sought out their performances.⁵⁷¹ Indeed, this was demonstrably the case for Sadler's Wells, which he recognised in his 1944 'Retrospect of the Season' as his 'only available source' of opera.⁵⁷² Many orchestras and opera companies were relocated or toured during World War Two (as both a means to survive and to aid CEMA's endeavours),⁵⁷³ and venues and series were closed or curtailed by periods of bombing. A further significant consideration was that the larger ensembles had their ranks severely depleted by enlistment and conscription.⁵⁷⁴ In contrast, the National Gallery concerts continued

⁵⁶⁸ For example, on 24/10/39 he described the piano 'ineffective' with the lid down in the 'lofty octagonal court' of the gallery, LJHB/02/041; on 30/12/40 he detailed his position and resultant acoustics in the air-raid shelter, LJHB/02/050; on 19/03/42 he recounted the effect on his experience of having a seat behind the performers' platform due to a 'vast audience', LJHB 02/068; and on 19/06/44 he described the 'rather resonant room downstairs, a room capable of holding about 150 which was more than the number who wished to attend in these days when (as 3¼ years ago) one is sometimes not sure save by the sound of explosions whether or not there is an "Alert" in progress'. LJHB/02/096a.

⁵⁶⁹ For example, he described regular changes made to the screens used to temper the echo. He wrote of an experience of the Hallé on 20/06/42 that without them 'we were back in an unreformed vastitude [*sic.*] so that it was difficult to compare the sound of this orchestra with recent experiences of L.S.O., L.P.O. & B.B.C.' LJHB 02/070. Similarly, on 01/11/41, he attended a RPS concert performed by the LPO with violinist Henry Holst. He began his bulletin with strikingly evocative descriptions to convey the atmosphere and effect: 'I am no more reconciled than before to hearing an orchestra in the Albert Hall. I felt as though I was at an open air concert in a fog & there was an unpleasant draught. [...] Smetana's Bartered Bride overture sounded like nothing on earth'. He also heard the first performance in Britain of Walton's Violin Concerto, yet wrote that it was 'really impossible to pass any judgement on it after one hearing in this awful building'. LJHB 02/070.

⁵⁷⁰ Prom No.2, 29/06/42, LJHB 02/071. Notably, he was unimpressed. For a discussion of the ideological and political implications of the symphony and event see Doctor, 'The Parataxis of "British Musical Modernism"', 104–5. See also Morris, 'Battle for Music', 32, 51.

⁵⁷¹ Bradley noted the LPO's 'struggle for existence' in the first year of war in his end of season note (LJHB 02/051). He described it as one of the two 'most important feature[s] of wartime music', alongside the National Gallery. The orchestra were rescued by funding from dance bandleader Jack Hylton, and embarked upon a tour of 'provincial music halls which thus, at last, justify their name'.

⁵⁷² LJHB 02/097.

⁵⁷³ For example, Sadler's Wells and the LSO toured the British provinces sponsored by CEMA. See Morrison, *Orchestra*, 91. Privately funded ensembles such as the LSO and LPO 'struggled hard to keep their organizations together and in work'. Doctor, 'A New Dimension', 120. The most well-documented and complex progression of changes and closures is that of the Proms, which changed hands twice during World War Two between the BBC and RPS, and had three of its seasons (1939, 1940 and 1944) curtailed by the outbreak of war and bombing. *Ibid.*, 119–28.

⁵⁷⁴ For example, Morrison suggests that 60 LSO players 'were on active service'. Morrison, *Orchestra*, 92.

regardless. As such Bradley had more regular access to the quartets and chamber ensembles that performed there.

Table 3.5 Distribution of ensembles Bradley heard most frequently, 1936–1946

Ensemble	Total times heard 1936– 1946 seasons	Attendance by calendar year (Oct 1936 to Sep 1946)										
		1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
LSO	50	1	2	5	3	4	11	11	3	2	7	1
Griller Quartet	58	2	3	2	2	1	5	7	14	13	7	2
LPO	113	3	15	10	10	11	11	8	6	12	13	14
Menges Quartet	36		1		2	2	9	4	10	4	2	2
Boyd Neel Orchestra	26		2	1	5	1		2	4	2	2	7
Sadler's Wells Opera	115		7	16	9	14	4	3	11	10	19	22
BBCSO	58		8	14	6			5	3	1	8	13
Stratton Quartet	24			2	1	1	6	9	5			
Blech Quartet	26					1	2	4	7	3	5	4
Zorian Quartet	21							2	4	2	9	4
Total:	560											

During the decade, he heard a further 121 ensembles, many of which were chamber groups. He also had over 400 experiences of soloists. It is notable however, that almost half of his experiences (560 of 1309) were provided by the ten ensembles he heard most regularly, as Table 3.5 demonstrates.

A significant feature of the wartime bulletins is the attention Bradley paid to the changing size, standard and composition of the orchestras he heard, and he was particularly concerned with the

age and gender of the players.⁵⁷⁵ He also noted when performers were wearing uniform.⁵⁷⁶ For example, on 11 March 1943, he heard the Griller Quartet and the strings of the RAF orchestra. He noted that 'most of the faces were familiar' and asserted that 'Whoever it was who had the intelligence to arrange that nearly all the best of our younger string players should put on RAF uniform & continue the practice of their art deserves the congratulations & thanks of every true lover of music'.⁵⁷⁷ Acknowledging the information that Bradley provides about wartime musical life in London is important, because the detail he provides makes a significant contribution to scholarly understanding of the period.⁵⁷⁸ For example, his assessments of venues, the changes in orchestral composition and changes made to opera productions provide information not found within the literature on the period.⁵⁷⁹

Discussions of serious music in this period have often been characterised by polarised narratives of modernism and educative populism in composition, programming and policies.⁵⁸⁰ This distinction is interesting with respect to Bradley, because throughout the decade he attended performances of a wide range of repertory, from the core canonical composers to little-known and contemporary chamber music.⁵⁸¹ To take 1938 as an example of his pre-war listening experiences, he attended both 'populist' concert series such as Beecham's 'Monday Pops' concerts and performances by the London Contemporary Music Centre (LCMC) and International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM).⁵⁸² A snapshot of the repertoire he heard in 1938 includes Mozart, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Fauré, Purcell, Byrd, Vaughan Williams, Schoenberg, Messaien, Stravinsky, Poulenc and Bartok (and over fifty others).⁵⁸³

⁵⁷⁵ For example, on 03/08/41 he heard the LSO at the Cambridge Theatre and remarked that the players ('about 50') were 'rather on the elderly side since there were not above six faces to be seen which might have belonged to someone under 40 years of age'. LJHB 02/059. He also noted that: 'Apart from the Albert Hall concerts (Promenade or otherwise) & the L.P.O season at the Coliseum [*sic.*], there have been very few opportunities of hearing an orchestra in the past three months & such as have presented themselves, I have (for one reason or another) neglected'.

⁵⁷⁶ For example, on 07/11/41 noted that only one player in the Griller Octet was not in uniform or khaki, an observation that accounted for most of his bulletin. LJHB 02/062.

⁵⁷⁷ 11/03/43, LJHB 02/080.

⁵⁷⁸ As acknowledged by Jane Pritchard, Curator of the London Archives of the Dance, in the documentary *One Man's War*, Bradley often provided a level of detail and comparison about performances that cannot be found in other critical sources such as reviews. 'One Man's War', 24:00–25:00.

⁵⁷⁹ For example, by the 1943–44 season, Bradley had seen the Sadler's Wells production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* eleven times, each time evaluating the production, sets, costumes and soloists.

⁵⁸⁰ See Wolf, 'Promoting New Music in London, 1930–1980', 26. For example, Doctor, *The BBC and Ultra-Modern Music, 1922–1936*.

⁵⁸¹ For the classification of serious music, see the discussion in Chapter 1.

⁵⁸² Populist concerts sought to introduce the general public to the 'standard orchestral repertory', in which Doctor argues that the Proms were a key player. Doctor, 'A New Dimension', 106–7. The LCMC and ISCM provided first performances of new repertory. See *The BBC and Ultra-Modern Music, 1922–1936*. In 1938, Bradley heard five Monday 'Pops' concerts, four LCMC recitals, and four performances by the ISCM during its visit in June (LJHB 02/027).

⁵⁸³ Booklets 02/018 to 02/032.

A notable component of Bradley's regular attendance at chamber music events from 1941 (see Table 3.2) was that he had an increased access to little-performed repertoire. For example, he considered that it was 'one of the merits' of the National Gallery concerts that 'they do provide opportunities of hearing works which might otherwise never come before one's notice at all'.⁵⁸⁴ During the Second World War Bradley also attended an increasing number of political concerts, which presented the repertoire of Allied countries and were sponsored by political bodies. By 1942, these events had become a significant component of his concert-going, and were providing him with access to a wide range of little-performed Czech, Polish, Russian and French repertoire as well as musicians.⁵⁸⁵ The contrasting side to this was an increased disdain in his bulletins for the standard orchestral classics that dominated populist orchestral concert programmes. For example, on 20 June 1942 he attended a Beethoven concert performed by the Hallé Orchestra, motivated by his desire to see them on a rare visit to London. He began his bulletin: 'I am rather of the opinion that too much Beethoven is being played nowadays in London. – It is out of all proportion. But Beethoven seems to be what the public wants if one may judge by the prospectus of the forthcoming Promenade Concerts, a fair indication of current popular taste'.⁵⁸⁶ Having listed the predominance of Beethoven across the forty-nine concert season, he wrote 'My appetite for Beethoven couldn't take in all of that'. Nevertheless, he enjoyed the event, and wrote

Pouishnoff gave a masterful performance of the Emperor Concerto, so that aided by fine support from the orchestra it didn't sound at all hackneyed, but the great piece of living music which it really is. If Symphony N° 5 didn't quite come up to this, it is partly because only a superlative performance can now make it seem remarkable to me

This is an interesting bulletin because it demonstrates that his relationship with repertoire was nuanced and based in several intertwined elements, and as much in the quality of the performance as the popularity and familiarity of the music. His retrospections also document an increased interest by 1943 in maintaining a 'balanced diet' of music that encompassed classical, contemporary and ancient repertoire as well as an equal measure of orchestral and chamber music.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁴ 15/09/43, LJHB 02/088.

⁵⁸⁵ For example, he attended concerts to celebrate French and Czech independence days, on 14/07/44, LJHB 02/097 and 28/10/43, LJHB 02/90 respectively. He also heard an all-Polish recital on 07/05/41, LJHB 02/058; and an all-Russian festival on 25/09/43, LJHB 02/088. A similar observation is made in *One Man's War*, 20:22, 26:54.

⁵⁸⁶ 20/06/42, LJHB 02/070.

⁵⁸⁷ For example, in 1943 he wrote: 'Peace time hardly gave us a comparable opportunity of hearing the best songs, piano music & chamber music, with occasional extravagances such as small choirs or small orchestras'. He also argued that 'if there is any tendency here to make the classics the stable diet (which is hardly objectionable in chamber music – using classic in a wide sense)', the balance was restored by the new works he had heard, particularly as part of 'the admirable concerts got up by Boosey & Hawkes, the French Committee & other bodies'. 'Retrospect of the Season 1942–3', LJHB 02/085. In 1944, having

2.2. The influence of war on individual experiences

This section examines a number of Bradley's experiences during the Second World War. These include four of his first wartime experiences and the only two bulletins that discuss bombing, in 1944. A remarkable feature of Bradley's bulletins from this period is how few of them present an emotional response to listening in the new wartime context. Only a handful of examples suggest that Bradley felt that his listening was instilled with ideological value due to the wartime context. These examples provide an interesting comparison both with the bulletins in the preceding section and with the reviews studied in Chapter 5.

A remarkable feature of several of Bradley's first wartime experiences is that he displayed a significant emotional and ideological engagement with the music. However, his first experience in wartime demonstrated that he intended to continue in the critical and evaluative tone of pre-war bulletins, and he therefore provided a particularly critical report. On 7 October 1939 he attended a recital by the pianist Frederic Lamond at the Wigmore Hall. The event is notable for two reasons. Firstly, the bulletin is the first after a three-month gap, and it is unclear whether Bradley had attended any concerts since June. Secondly, this was likely to have been Bradley's first experience of live music within the context of uncertainty and fear about the survival of live classical music that pervaded the first month of war.⁵⁸⁸ It was certainly one of the first performances in London following the government ban (see Chapter 1). He wrote:

This was the first recital in the rather restricted music-giving which wartime allows & it was pleasant to see a pretty good audience in spite of the counter attraction of the first L.S.O. Symphony concert at the Queen's Hall. Lamond is one of our musical veterans & was never quite in the highest rank. But he remains a respectable pianist tho' he hasn't all the force & fire which he must have had in earlier years. For this reason the music we heard this afternoon never quite kindled into flame. And the Liszt with which the programme opened was definitely on the side of austerity. That was doubtless right enough for the variations on Bach's 'Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen' but I did feel that the Sonata in B minor (in one movement) might have had rather more life in it. [...] All in all the main satisfaction of the afternoon was in having once again heard some music at first hand⁵⁸⁹

There are several interesting components here. Firstly, the bulletin demonstrates that he had a considered opinion of the quality of both Lamond as a performer, and the music he chose. It is

evaluated his concert-going as 'lopsided' he decided that 'next year I must try to redress the balance a little in favour of the orchestra'. 'Retrospect of the Season 1943-44', LJHB 02/097.

⁵⁸⁸ This period is discussed in further detail in Chapter 5. See also Morris, 'Battle for Music'.

⁵⁸⁹ 07/10/39, LJHB 02/039.

evident that his judgement of Lamond as only 'respectable' rather than 'highest rank' was a significant component of his experience (and bears comparison to the following example). Secondly, there are a number of linguistic choices that demonstrate the judgements he conveyed at a textual level. Moreover, there is a strong correlation with the terminology of the bulletin about Rosé discussed above, and the language of the wartime situation: 'fire' and 'austerity'. Thirdly, he chose to present his engagement with the experience as one of 'satisfaction', as opposed to enjoyment of a deeper connection. This suggests that the evident influence of the wartime context was primarily material, and conveyed through his relief at hearing music 'at first hand' again.

Bradley wrote a markedly different bulletin about his next wartime experience. On 10 October 1939, he attended the afternoon performance of the first day of National Gallery concerts.⁵⁹⁰ He began:

It was a splendid idea on the part of Myra Hess to get up this series of concerts which has the triple object of helping musicians who have been badly hit by the war, of finding a wartime use for the National Gallery, and of giving the public a chance of hearing music during the week. The concerts take place at midday (1.0 – 2.0) from Monday to Friday & the Tuesday & Friday program are repeated in the afternoon (4.30 – 5.30) with an entrance fee of 2/6 instead of the midday 1/-. Apparently hundreds of people had to be turned away from the midday performance & this afternoon "repeat" attracted an audience of nearly 200. Myra Hess is a musician (like Harold Samuel) whose playing rouses in me affection as well as admiration, intensified now by one's gratitude for this latest enterprise of hers. The result was that this hour of music gave me all the glow of satisfaction which I had missed in Lamond's recital. She began with two pieces of Scarlatti played so delicately & beautifully that for once one had little reason to regret their not being played on a harpsichord. There followed some familiar but unidentified Bach [The only programme was a poster at the door which said 'Preludes & Fugues 22 & 23' with 23 crossed out – it wasn't that and I think on reflection that it was the Italian Concerto] Whatever it was, it was beautifully played & quite carried me away. Then came Beethoven's Appassionata Sonata. There are few women who could play it so well & tho' I am not sure that I would like to hear her play the late Sonatas there was little fault that could be found with this. Next came some pleasant Dances by Schubert which included

⁵⁹⁰ The iconic ideological position of the National Gallery concerts has been introduced in Chapter 1, and is discussed in detail in Chapter 5, in which the linguistic and stylistic elements of Bradley's bulletin are compared with those of the reviews studied. The significance widely accorded to the series has meant that its advent and survival is not only well-documented but re-mythologised in a variety of literature on the period. For example Calder, *The People's War*, 373; Zeigler, *London at War*, 50; Morrison, *Orchestra*, 89; Morris, 'Battle for Music', 36–8.

some of those which Liszt used in “Soirée de Vienne”. For the rest the poster said “Works by Chopin & Brahms”. I heard two pieces of Chopin which I didn’t recognise & whose titles were inaudibly announced – and then at 5.40 I tore myself reluctantly away. There had been an atmosphere of peace & normality – beauty in the playing which affected one deeply as it did many others. God bless Myra Hess⁵⁹¹

The bulletin is remarkable for several reasons. Firstly, his opinion of Myra Hess was central to his engagement with the experience and the value he accorded it.⁵⁹² As with his celebration of Rosé, he discusses Hess in carefully constructed language and references that conveyed a message about her quality as a musician. Moreover, he was conspicuously uncritical of the performance, despite his gendered qualification of her skills (Chapter 5 examines this as an encultured opinion). Secondly, he described his engagement in very different terms, specifically ‘carried me away’, which has an interesting correlation to the discussion of musical engagement and escapism in Chapter 1. Thirdly, it was unusual for Bradley to mention a collective element to his experiences, which further adds to the significance of the bulletin. Fourthly, it records a striking amount of peripheral detail about the event and Bradley’s attention to the prices is unusual, suggesting that he was making an effort to be particularly informative, perhaps for the benefit of his audience. Fifthly, in comparison to the preceding example there are several noteworthy elements in the language he used. Perhaps to reinforce the difference in his response, he repeated the term ‘satisfaction’ from his evaluation of Lamond to convey his comparison. There is also the sense that on this occasion Bradley was receptive to the ideological significance of the wartime context, demonstrated by the language of the concluding remarks, phrased in direct opposition to war: ‘peace & normality’. The use of the term ‘normality’ is significant because this bulletin displayed a style and content that differed from his regular critical practice. It suggests a sense of longing for the established pre-war routines and everything already lost to the changes wrought by the Second World War. The overall impression conveyed by the bulletin is that Bradley’s experience was intensified by a number of factors, from his gratitude of the gesture and admiration for Hess, to an appreciation of normality in the uncertain wartime context, to fact that he was unable (or perhaps unwilling in the circumstances) to critically evaluate the repertoire without more specific information.

Two further experiences within the first two months of concert-going provide an interesting comparison with these conclusions. Firstly, the following day on 11 October, Bradley attended an Everyman’s Concert at the Rudolf Steiner hall, given by pianist Georg van Harten and singer Elsie Suddaby. He represented his experience in critical terms, for example evaluating Harten’s

⁵⁹¹ 10/10/39, LJHB 02/039. Square brackets original.

⁵⁹² Before the Second World War, Hess was already an established and popular soloist with a long career. See Doctor, ‘A New Dimension’.

performance as 'a little cold & academic'. However, he concluded by directly relating his experience to that of Hess the previous day, reinforcing the ideological assertion of war-related shared experience: 'It would perhaps have been greedy to have asked for more, but it seemed a long way to go for about an hour's music & there was not in the audience the same atmosphere of grateful peace & contentment that there had been at Myra Hess's recital – perhaps because Herr von Harten isn't Myra Hess'.⁵⁹³ This supports the assertion that Hess was the central factor in his engagement at the National Gallery.

Secondly, on 21 November Bradley heard Myra Hess perform again at the National Gallery with the Menges Quartet. The bulletin is unique for this decade in that Bradley documented a visibly emotional experience.⁵⁹⁴ He concluded his bulletin:

After the quintet Myra Hess re-appeared alone to play (at the request of someone who was over from France for a few days) her own well known & well loved arrangement of Bach's choral prelude 'Jesu Joy of man's desiring'. I confess it made me weep. She played it so beautifully & it was such a lovely reminder of the sane world of yesterday and tomorrow⁵⁹⁵

In this example there is again, a remarkable response to an experience of a performance by Hess. Moreover, Bradley similarly framed his experience with reference to the wartime context, inferring that music provided an essential link between the chaos of war and sanity of peace. This suggests that his emotion was again linked to a longing for normality, and that his experience was inherently influenced by the war.

Another experience at the National Gallery demonstrates a contrasting way in which Bradley was affected by a musical experience. On 23 January 1941, he attended a Beethoven concert performed by the Stratton Quartet, noting that the concerts had 'embarked on the ambitious undertaking of a series of programmes to include all the pianoforte & chamber works' of the composer.⁵⁹⁶ He heard two quartets. His bulletin is an interesting collection of assessments because as mentioned above with respect to records, Beethoven's String Quartet in G was a favoured and familiar work for him. He wrote: 'Both were well played tho' I have heard finer performances of each of them [...] With such a feast for the ear & mind to sustain me, the fact

⁵⁹³ 11/10/39, LJHB 02/039.

⁵⁹⁴ Providing an interesting comparison with the conventional internalised response of serious listening, discussed in Chapter 1.

⁵⁹⁵ 21/11/39, LJHB 02/041.

⁵⁹⁶ 23/01/41, LJHB 02/053. Kildea notes that performing complete cycles of repertoire by popular composers ('completionism') became an established practice in orchestral concert programming in the early twentieth-century, especially for large, regular series such as the Proms (and National Gallery concerts) who needed to provide variety. Paul Kildea, 'The Proms: An Industrious Revolution', in *The Proms: A New History*, ed. Jennifer Doctor and David Wright (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 25.

that the sandwich bar had nothing left but two pieces of bread & butter did not cause me any pangs'. Although he did not mention the war, a similar ideological message about the value of the music is conveyed. The relationship Bradley created between musical and physical sustenance demonstrates that he valued musical experience as more than enjoyment or entertainment. It suggests that musical experience had a deeper function for him, particularly on an intellectual level.

Two final examples conclude this section and provide a striking contrast to the emotional, war-related engagement described in several of the examples above. There were only two occasions during the Second World War when Bradley directly mentioned the bombs that would have been a dominant feature of daily life during the three periods of regular air raids. Both examples occurred in mid-1944 during the V-weapons assault⁵⁹⁷ and are remarkable for the detached nature with which he reported the distraction. His attitude correlates to Zeigler's assertion that 'most Londoners endured the V2s with remarkable equanimity'.⁵⁹⁸ On 16 June 1944, Bradley attended a recital by the London Belgian Piano Quartet at the National Gallery. His bulletin was brief and evaluated the merits of the repertoire, by Beethoven and Walton. He then noted in conclusion: 'It may be of interest to record that the above concert was 3 times interrupted by sirens – 2 all clears & 1 alert. – It was quite like old times & may have been responsible for a rather meagre attendance'.⁵⁹⁹ His comment is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, the sense that he was addressing an audience whom he felt might be interested (whether his recipients or his own future self); secondly, that he likened the event to 'old times', suggesting that his audience shared an implicit understanding of this reference.

The second example occurred a month later, on 23 July, and is notably more evocative of the experience of bombing. Bradley attended a concert by Myra Hess at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, which he described as 'the first of a new series of Sunday Concerts designed by CEMA to alleviate the present dearth of week-end music'.⁶⁰⁰ Hess performed repertoire by Haydn, Schubert, Beethoven followed by Schumann's Carnival:

During the playing of 'Eusebius', a flying bomb came down at Earl's Court a mile & a quarter away, near enough to make all the loose doors &c of the theatre rattle. It didn't interrupt the flow of music or the attention of the audience. Perhaps that is not unreasonable since when one of these things has gone off one knows that it is over &

⁵⁹⁷ The V-weapons assault differed from the preceding Blitzes because the raid happened during the daytime as well as at night, and the rockets offered little warning of their arrival. Although for example, the Proms season was cut short, some music-making continued. As discussed above, the National Gallery concerts moved into the basement. See Zeigler, *London at War*, 298–9, 306–7.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁵⁹⁹ 16/06/44, LHB 02/096a.

⁶⁰⁰ 23/07/44, LHB 02/097.

hasn't to trouble (as with manned bombers) that it may drop another one at any moment.

A significant observation is that Bradley's description is remarkably similar to the dominant ideological images that surround experiences of wartime music, as well as Hess's power over the audience more specifically (see Chapter 1). There is also an interesting distinction between the reasoned commentary of this bulletin, written about a period of actual danger, and the emotional engagement of the initial period of war. A possible conclusion is that beyond the initial uncertainty and adaptation to the new cultural, physical and mental environment of wartime, once a routine of wartime music-making had been established and musical survival was more certain, the ideological significance of a listening experience was lessened. The public more generally became accustomed to war and the physical danger it posed. Therefore, Bradley's description of the unfailing attention of the audience perhaps had another reason to the one he gave. On the one hand it seems remarkable given the vivid picture that these two entries portray of the dangers of wartime concert-going that they are the only mentions he made of air-raids in his bulletins. However, this scarcity is also demonstrative of the fact that the majority of Bradley's experiences within wartime, documented in hundreds of other bulletins, were not physically or ideologically significant events. In these bulletins, Bradley continued to report and evaluate the altered standards and conditions of his experiences with critical listening and observation. The noteworthy conclusion prompted by the scarcity of direct references to the Second World War, therefore, is that this represented a new routine of wartime listening for him.

Summary

This chapter has argued that Bradley demonstrated a complex, yet encultured set of behaviours and expectations as a listener. It has shown how the different elements of his listening experiences were interconnected in their influence upon his engagement and response, and argues that his bulletins were carefully constructed to present considered informative and evaluative accounts. It also argues that Bradley practised attentive yet heteronomous listening, and that his musical knowledge had an important effect on the way he listened. This chapter has established the considerable effect that the Second World War had upon the material conditions and patterns of Bradley's concert-going. However, it also argues that as Bradley made only rare, oblique references to the wartime context of his listening, the majority of his listening experiences continued along the conventional boundaries he had established, within a new altered normality.

Chapter 4: Experiencing popular music

This chapter examines experiences of popular music in several different contexts and environments. Popular music was a dominant part of the musical culture in Britain in the 1930s and 1940s. Its wartime narrative was complex, fragmented and closely connected to the political situation. Several strands of this narrative are explored in this chapter. Firstly, as introduced in Chapter 1, popular music gained an important ideological function in wartime as an integral morale-building tool.⁶⁰¹ The value of popular music was that it was entertainment, which had a perceived capacity to distract, relieve and uplift listeners, and sustain their morale through the difficulties of war.⁶⁰² As such, entertainment (from popular songs to cinema-going) gained significance and function, whilst simultaneously it was devalued as a source of 'narcotized', superficial escapism.⁶⁰³ Secondly, popular music was valued as 'a site of community'.⁶⁰⁴ It was commonly understood that it had the ability to 'draw listeners together in shared affinities' in both real and imagined communities, whether temporary or permanent.⁶⁰⁵ As such, it was frequently seen to embody the values of the 'people's war' ideology. Nevertheless, its wartime identity was contested by an ongoing debate constructed as an opposition between patriotism, virility and masculinity and the widespread popularity of sentimentality.⁶⁰⁶ Thirdly, popular music was a 'resource at work in the lives of ordinary people'.⁶⁰⁷ In addition to being a means of entertainment, diversion, and escapism, it was an important tool for listeners, a 'means for the management of personal crisis' and identity.⁶⁰⁸ Popular songs were an important component of listeners' interactions with popular music, and provided listeners with a variety of images of 'Britishness to which they could easily relate'.⁶⁰⁹ Fourthly, British popular music was inextricably intertwined with American popular culture, including films, dance music, songs and stars.⁶¹⁰ This influence had a considerable effect on the popular music the public encountered.⁶¹¹

⁶⁰¹ See Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 204–5.

⁶⁰² Guthrie, 'Vera Lynn on Screen', 266.

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*, 247, 254.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁶⁰⁵ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 4.

⁶⁰⁶ See *ibid.*; Guthrie, 'Vera Lynn on Screen', 252. See also Chapter 2.

⁶⁰⁷ Cleveland, 'Singing Warriors', 173.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 173. This was not just the case for popular music: classical music (indeed, all music) was used this way by listeners, as the preceding chapters demonstrate.

⁶⁰⁹ Guthrie, 'Vera Lynn on Screen', 252.

⁶¹⁰ During the Second World War, the relationship between the British public and American popular culture was complicated, for example by arrival of American soldiers and dance bands in the lead up to D-Day, and by British opinion of America more widely. Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 143; Nott, *Going to the Palais*, 52, 265–71. See also McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 434.

⁶¹¹ However, American popular culture is primarily considered here through Hollywood musical films.

There are a number of important distinctions between the wide-ranging experiences discussed in this chapter. They encompass live, broadcast and recorded formats, occurring in public and in domestic situations, and within cultivated, structured and informal, spontaneous, unstructured occasions. They also feature a variety of trained musicians, from 'stars' to amateurs, as well as the musical public more generally, who participated through the equalising medium of song. A notable point is that each type of experience was enacted and understood within its own set of expectations and needs, and the music took a more or less prominent role accordingly.

This chapter has three parts. The first part introduces the sources and the nature of diary writing as a medium through which listeners could manage and construct their wartime identities. The second part discusses Frank Lewis as a diarist, music-lover and cinema-goer. It analyses his experiences of music at the cinema and explores the nature of his listening in comparison with preceding chapters. It also argues that the affinity he felt with the American lifestyle portrayed in Hollywood films, and a penchant for sentimentality, fundamentally shaped the way he related to music in the cinema. The third section discusses popular music encountered in a variety of media, broadcast, at dances, in community singing, and at variety concerts. It argues that the effect of popular music upon listeners in wartime was inherently shaped by community, collectiveness, and the stars of the industry. It also examines the effect of the Second World War upon the repertory and contexts in which popular music was encountered.

1. Musical experiences in diary writing

This chapter analyses experiences of popular music that were found within two collections of diaries. The first collection is the personal diaries of Francis (Frank) Raymond Lewis (b.1921).⁶¹² Lewis began keeping a diary in October 1942, when he was a student at Manchester University, studying Geography, History and Economics. Lewis continued to keep a regular, often daily diary about all aspects of his life and had filled thirty-six notebooks by June 1945.⁶¹³ His diaries for this period include musical experiences he had in both Manchester and his native Barry (South Wales), where he regularly spent university holidays.⁶¹⁴ After he left University in April 1944, Lewis returned to Barry and was briefly employed at the local YMCA, before moving back to Manchester in November 1944 where he worked in a number of posts until the end of World War Two.⁶¹⁵ Lewis's diaries reveal that he was an avid fan of popular music and film. Cinema-going and dancing were important, regular features of Lewis's life, especially as a student in Manchester. He

⁶¹² The diaries are listed in the Introduction and Bibliography. The diaries for October 1942 to June 1945 are numbered D51/1/1 to D51/1/36.

⁶¹³ Biographical information for Lewis is given on the archive website:

https://archiveswales.llgc.org.uk/anw/get_collection.php?coll_id=77684&inst_id=33&term=frank%20lewis.

⁶¹⁴ For example, 17/12/42 to 11/01/43, D51/1/5–8, and 26/03/43 to 23/04/43, D51/1/11–12.

⁶¹⁵ Succinctly described by Lewis in a reflection of the past year of his life on 29/04/45, D51/1/35.

also documented broadcasts he heard, music-making or record evenings with friends, and occasional attendance at live music events, including concerts and the theatre. The differences in his listening attitudes, engagement and responses for these different types of experiences are discussed below. Lewis wrote in great detail about the emotional effect that music had upon him. As such, his diaries are unique among the sources studied in this thesis. This chapter explores how popular music and film were potent sources of inspiration for him during the Second World War, and argues that the spectacle, glamour and intimacy of the cinema had an important impact on the way he listened in other environments. Due to the frequency and scope of his musical encounters, Lewis is the primary source for this chapter, and recurs throughout the following sections.

Other views of popular music are provided by a second collection of diaries written for the left-wing social survey organisation Mass Observation (MO). MO was formed in 1937 by anthropologist Tom Harrisson, poet and journalist Charles Madge, and documentary film-maker Humphrey Jennings. They set out to create an 'anthropology of ourselves' that would document the values and lives of 'ordinary people'.⁶¹⁶ Between 1937 and 1938, MO recruited a 'panel' of volunteer mass observers from the general public, which comprised approximately 400 men and women.⁶¹⁷ Many responded to monthly 'Directives' that asked them to observe and evaluate their everyday lives, thoughts, habits, feelings and belief-systems and of those around them.⁶¹⁸ In the lead-up to war, MO invited its volunteers to contribute monthly 'war diaries', and from August 1939 many responded. Some wrote briefly, but over 100 others kept diaries throughout and beyond the Second World War.⁶¹⁹ The diarists were primarily young, 'lower-middle class', educated individuals who had an interest in wartime current affairs.⁶²⁰

Several historians have described the motivations of the MO volunteers in similar terms to those who wrote to the BBC (see Chapter 2).⁶²¹ For example, it has been suggested that they shared the values and goals of MO; were looking for 'meaning and purpose in their lives'; wished to participate in society as active citizens; wanted a platform to express their views; felt politically disenfranchised; or simply took pleasure in writing.⁶²² Noakes argues that writing for MO

⁶¹⁶ Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 2; Noakes, *War and the British*, 76; Garfield, *We Are at War*, 2. See also Mass Observation Online.

⁶¹⁷ See Mass Observation Online, Tom Jeffrey, *Mass-Observation: a short history* (Birmingham, 1978), Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*.

⁶¹⁸ Noakes, *War and the British*, 77.

⁶¹⁹ Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 2.

⁶²⁰ Noakes, *War and the British*, 77. The publication of MO diaries has become a widespread trend in recent years, providing material for academic studies, such as Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*; and popular culture as collected anthologies and individual reproductions, such as Garfield, *We Are at War*; *Private Battles*.

⁶²¹ See Silvey, *Who's Listening?*, 29–31.

⁶²² Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 2; Noakes, *War and the British*, 77, 80, 82. See also Jeffrey, *Mass-Observation*.

empowered the diarists by giving their opinions legitimacy on topics they might otherwise not discuss.⁶²³ The diaries provide rich detail about the reality of wartime life in Britain and ‘show the complexities of belief’ that underset everyday interactions and experiences in wartime.⁶²⁴ An interesting consideration is that the MO diaries were written for an ‘imagined audience’, which Hinton argues mediated their content, structure and style according to how the individual diarists interpreted the MO brief.⁶²⁵ For example, as a collection they were submitted to MO in a variety of forms. Some were daily accounts, others written as retrospective compilations of notes taken over the month; some were handwritten, others typeset; some unedited, others corrected. Moreover, some are intimate and personal, while others provided detached observation.⁶²⁶ This suggests that the purpose of writing for MO conditioned what the diarists thought pertinent to mention and how they constructed the representations of their experiences.

The MO diarists studied here are young people, who regularly listened to the radio and attended dances, local musical events and the cinema. For the purpose of this project, the pool of MO diarists was limited to those who wrote regularly about musical experiences and tastes, which established them as musically interested. Following this, five diarists were chosen who had a variety of experiences, and illuminated the diversity and impact of different media of popular music in wartime. This enabled a comparison with Lewis’s experiences.

MO guaranteed the anonymity of their volunteers and categorised them by gender, age, occupation and locality. As such they are identified here by the numbers assigned to them. Diarist 5186 was a young man, born in 1910, who worked as a shorthand typist in Woking, Surrey and kept a MO diary between October 1941 and March 1945. Diarist 5205, a young man born in 1920, was a shop assistant in Great Baddow, Essex who wrote a diary for MO throughout the Second World War, beginning in August 1939. Diarist 5228, born in 1914, was a textile salesman and warehouseman from Birmingham who signed up within months of the outbreak of war, and only maintained an MO diary between August 1939 and March 1940. Diarist 5226, a young man born in 1921, was a solicitor’s clerk and regular cinema-goer from Maryport, Cumberland. His MO diary began in August 1941 and ended in December 1943. Diarist 5341 was a young woman born in 1916, who worked as shorthand typist and hospital library assistant in Liverpool and kept a diary for MO between August 1939 and February 1942. Alongside these diarists, a number of entries from Garfield’s published MO diaries provide comparison.⁶²⁷ They were written by Pam Ashford, ‘a secretary at a coal shipping firm in Glasgow’, in her late thirties; Edward Stebbing, ‘a soldier in

⁶²³ *War and the British*, 81.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁶²⁵ Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 5.

⁶²⁶ See Noakes, *War and the British*, 80–1.

⁶²⁷ Garfield provided the diarists in his anthologies with pseudonyms, or used their real names with permission.

his early twenties' from Essex; Tilly Rice, a mother evacuated with her children to Port Isaac; and Maggie Joy Blunt, a 'freelance writer in her early thirties, living near Burnham Beeches in Slough'.⁶²⁸

The two collections differ from the sources in the surrounding chapters in two ways. Firstly, they wrote about their musical experiences within diaries that addressed their whole lives, and entries about music occurred with different regularity. In the MO diaries music is often discussed as part of broader entries, and they are commonly less reflective than those of Lewis. Secondly, the nature and mediation of diary writing as a tool for self-expression also had a different function than letters, bulletins and reviews. As witnessed below with respect to Lewis, the intimacy of diary writing encouraged the exploration and articulation of 'the ambiguous, unresolved, contradictory nature of the thoughts and feelings involved in their own ongoing projects of self-fashioning'.⁶²⁹ It enabled individuals to produce, reflect on and manage narratives about their past, present and future identities as well as relationships: public and private, critical and emotional, 'ordinary self and higher self'.⁶³⁰ The social upheaval of mid-twentieth-century Britain meant that individuals were forced to grapple with their sense of self to an unprecedented degree, through a process of invention and reinvention, as they sought to find a place within wartime societies. As discussed above, popular music acted as a 'cultural resource' that individuals could use to 'weave meaningful narratives of their personal identities' and manage both personal and national tension and crisis in wartime.⁶³¹ In particular, this chapter explores how the interaction of popular music and diary writing enabled the listeners, particularly Lewis, to negotiate their sense of self-identity within their cultural communities.

2. Frank Lewis, Hollywood and engagement with film music

This section analyses Lewis's experiences of film music. It argues that his sense of self, and the function of his diaries provided an important framework for understanding the nature and content of his representations of his listening experiences. It also suggests that his experiences were inherently conditioned by his relationship with Hollywood films and the American lifestyle they portrayed.

As introduced in Chapter 1, cinema-going was one of the dominant forms of popular leisure during the 1930s and as economical as a form of entertainment and socialisation, it flourished within the restricted leisure opportunities of wartime.⁶³² Following the initial official closures,

⁶²⁸ See Garfield, *We Are at War*, 4–5; *Private Battles*, 3–4.

⁶²⁹ Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 3.

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, 4. See also Noakes, *War and the British*, 81–91.

⁶³² See Nott, who describes this same effect with respect to dancing. Nott, *Going to the Palais*, 46.

cinema-going 'thrived', with weekly attendance figures expanding to more than thirty million in 1944 and 1945.⁶³³ Therefore, for many Britons, cinema-going was an integral part of wartime life. Much of the scholarly literature about cinema-going audiences of the period is based on figures drawn from contemporary surveys from the 1930s and 1940s that analysed the extent to which different demographics of the public visited the cinema.⁶³⁴ They suggest that attendance was influenced by age, class, gender and location.⁶³⁵ Predominantly, the most frequent attendees were women, young people, and the lower class or lower middle class who had lower economic status and education levels.⁶³⁶ A 1939 social survey suggested that seventy-five percent of cinema-goers were female, and half were young people.⁶³⁷ The keenest of them went as often as two or three times a week.⁶³⁸ Lewis's relationship to these statistics is interesting. His diaries indicate that he was a frequent attendee (see below); however, as a male university student, to some extent he stood in contrast to the dominant demographic trends. The relationship between his emotionality and responses to Hollywood and the gendered discourses presented in the scholarship on diary-writing and cinema-going is discussed below.⁶³⁹

In the 1930s and 1940s, going to the cinema was a continuous experience, in which feature films were framed by newsreels, cartoons or comedy 'short' films, second features, and in some locations, live interval music.⁶⁴⁰ For example, Lewis often saw two films in one cinema experience.⁶⁴¹ Given the frequency of regular attendance, it is unsurprising that many people saw their favourite feature films multiple times.⁶⁴² For many people, going to the cinema was an institutionalised weekly social ritual, less about films and stars than about routine leisure and an opportunity to get away from home and socialise with friends, family or lovers.⁶⁴³ Several scholars have argued that 'going to the pictures' was 'the essential social habit of the age'.⁶⁴⁴ Richards

⁶³³ Glancy, 'Picturegoer', 453. McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 419.

⁶³⁴ For example, see Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*; Jeffrey Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palace: Cinema and Society in 1930s Britain*, revised ed. (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010); McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*.

⁶³⁵ *Classes and Cultures*, 419.

⁶³⁶ See Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*, 12, 170–1.

⁶³⁷ Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palace*, 12.

⁶³⁸ Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*, 171. An extensive 1943 investigation by the Wartime Social Survey suggested that forty-three percent of young people went twice or more per week. Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palace*, 14; Glancy, 'Picturegoer', 456–7.

⁶³⁹ See McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*; Noakes, *War and the British*.

⁶⁴⁰ *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*, 29; McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 387.

⁶⁴¹ For example, on 25/11/42 Lewis saw *The Goose Steps Out* and *Dr. Broadway*, and noted that 'the first picture is supposed to be a big picture, in the sense the second is not supposed to be, because the second is a supporting film'. Nevertheless, he connected more deeply with the second feature (see below). D51/1/3.

⁶⁴² Lewis saw some of his favourite musicals many times. For example, on 08/08/44, he saw *Thank Your Lucky Stars* (1943) 'for the 6th, 7th or 8th time'. D51/1/27.

⁶⁴³ Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*, 28–9.

⁶⁴⁴ A.J.P. Taylor, quoted in 'Picturegoer', 453. Interestingly, Nott refutes this assertion, and suggests that dancing was the primary social habit because it involved a 'greater degree of social interaction'. He argues

argues that going to the cinema was an occasion, imbued with a 'feel of ritual' by habitual attendance, sitting in silence and darkness, and queueing for entry.⁶⁴⁵ The continuity of the entertainment meant that some audience members arrived and left in the middle of features, which, combined with the social aspect, could be a potential distraction from concentrated attention.

Discourse about wartime cinema-going has two dominant themes, both of which have particular relevance to Lewis's relationship with the cinema. Firstly, that Hollywood films effectively promoted an American lifestyle. During the Second World War, Hollywood films were a prominent part of the cinema culture of Britain, and 'the staple of the cinema-going diet'.⁶⁴⁶ The volume of films released each year by the United States meant that they accounted for eighty percent of feature-length films shown in Britain.⁶⁴⁷ Therefore, the stars of Hollywood films had a notable presence in, and influence on, the lives of British cinema-goers.⁶⁴⁸ Moreover, Hollywood promoted an idealised stereotype of American life, epitomised by glamour, wealth, abundance and power, which contrasted distinctly with the austerity of wartime Britain.⁶⁴⁹ As Glancy argues, 'audiences could scarcely fail to register that this culture appeared more affluent, egalitarian and democratic than their own'.⁶⁵⁰ McKibbin suggests that female cinema-goers 'made no attempt to conceal their daydreams'.⁶⁵¹ Despite the gendered qualification, this view has striking resemblance to Lewis's own feelings about America (see below). The extent to which cinema-goers were 'sold' on an American lifestyle was the cause of considerable debate. Widespread admiration was balanced in wartime by an anti-American resentment and an awareness of the illusory nature of this ideal.⁶⁵² McKibbin suggests that wartime cinema-goers understood that 'the fantasy world of American wealth [...] was as much to do with them and their emotional and physical needs as with a transatlantic cornucopia, which might or might not exist.'⁶⁵³

The second theme of scholarly discourse is that cinema-going in wartime epitomised escapism. This was a popular assertion in contemporary reports, which suggested that films were 'interludes from the routine of living' for bored war workers, who flocked to the cinema to escape the

that cinema-going and dancing served two different but related needs for escapism and communal experience. Nott, *Going to the Palais*, 53.

⁶⁴⁵ Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palace*, 1.

⁶⁴⁶ Glancy, 'Picturegoer', 454.

⁶⁴⁷ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 143.

⁶⁴⁸ Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*, 144.

⁶⁴⁹ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 419, 23, 32. For example, a 1942 MO survey argued that 'people look upon films as [...] a process of unreality', which were representative of a 'sort of dream stereotype' of American life. Quoted in Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*, 35, 21.

⁶⁵⁰ *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*, 23.

⁶⁵¹ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 432.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, 433–5; Jennifer R. Jenkins, "'Say It with Firecrackers': Defining the "War Musical" of the 1940s', *American Music* 19, no. 3 (2001), 331.

⁶⁵³ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 435.

monotony and hardship of home front life in comfort.⁶⁵⁴ Therefore, the popularity of Hollywood films and dramatic increase in wartime attendance have been closely tied to a preference for 'light relief' and escapism.⁶⁵⁵ Glancy argues that popular preference for Hollywood was based on an aesthetic choice that privileged escapism through 'glamour, spectacle, adventure and exoticism' and geographical distance, over the realism and social relevance often present in British films.⁶⁵⁶ Similarly Richards describes cinemas as 'dream palaces', places to which 'people went regularly in order to be taken out of themselves and their lives for an hour or two' in luxurious comfort.⁶⁵⁷ In particular, musicals were considered to be ultimate 'escapist fantasies' provided by the Hollywood 'dream factory'.⁶⁵⁸

An important element to the escapist discourse was the 'star' culture that was prevalent in popular music culture more widely in the 1930s and 1940s. Both British and American musical stars achieved fame via the radio, cinema and gramophone.⁶⁵⁹ In particular, Hollywood stars represented a magical, idealised glamour and 'other-worldly luxury' that contrasted with the austerity of wartime life in Britain.⁶⁶⁰ Moreover, stardom was 'associated with individuality, aspirations to rise above the ordinary and escapist pursuits of fantasy'.⁶⁶¹ This has particular relevance to Lewis's experiences of and responses to films, and McKibbin argues that stars were 'an important part of the viewer-film bond'.⁶⁶² Several scholars suggest that 'stars were worshipped' and idolised by the British cinema-going public, and the culture was perpetuated by fan magazines such as *Picturegoer*.⁶⁶³ Moreover, cinema-goers often identified with particular stars who were emblematic of power and 'competitive individual achievement'.⁶⁶⁴

2.1. Lewis as a diarist and listener

Lewis's diaries record in strikingly personal detail his experiences, emotions and thoughts. He began his diaries in October 1942 as a personal tool for recording 'occasions when emotion overcame me' so he could process and reflect on the good, 'sentimental' and bitter emotions triggered by different events.⁶⁶⁵ However, the diaries rapidly evolved from the intimacy of private

⁶⁵⁴ See Glancy, 'Picturegoer', 470; *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*, 35.

⁶⁵⁵ Guthrie, 'Vera Lynn on Screen', 250. See Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*; Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palace*.

⁶⁵⁶ Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*, 35.

⁶⁵⁷ Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palace*, 1. The notion of films as 'dreams' recurs across the literature, and has striking similarity to the terms Lewis used to describe his experience (see below).

⁶⁵⁸ Jenkins, "'Say It with Firecrackers'", 319.

⁶⁵⁹ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 431.

⁶⁶⁰ Glancy, 'Picturegoer', 460.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 464.

⁶⁶² McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 431.

⁶⁶³ Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palace*, 1; McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 431–6. See also Glancy, 'Picturegoer'.

⁶⁶⁴ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 432–3.

⁶⁶⁵ 15/10/42, D51/1/1.

reflection into a collaborative scrapbook form that functioned as a compilation of his life. For example, from November 1942 the diaries incorporated news articles,⁶⁶⁶ regular lists of popular 'songs to remember',⁶⁶⁷ and occasional pamphlets about hit dance songs.⁶⁶⁸ Two of his friends had an important influence upon his diaries, musical experiences, and attitude towards music: Malcolm, his 'chief Manchester friend at this period',⁶⁶⁹ and Ewart, who encouraged Lewis's musical education in Barry (see below). From his fourth notebook (December 1942), there is regular evidence that a close circle of friends read, commented on and made corrections to Lewis's entries, as well as writing their own entries.⁶⁷⁰ He also included question and answer sessions for his friends, collecting their opinions on a wide range of topics.⁶⁷¹ For example, on 8 January 1943 Lewis formed the 'Club for Observers of Life', which consisted of himself, Ewart and another friend, who were required to write passages on subjects including girls, life and beauty, self-consciousness and 'today'.⁶⁷² However, there is little evidence that this audience altered or mediated the intimate, emotional way he constructed his entries, providing a contrast to the tailored responses of the MO diaries.

Diary writing prompted 'critical self-examination' and encouraged Lewis to look deeply into the source of his sense of self.⁶⁷³ His diaries were a place for contemplation and discussion as he negotiated his place in the social, musical and political environments of a wartime world. They were a space for Lewis to construct and evaluate his sense of current and future selfhood, and to contemplate philosophical and political values in comparison with those of his friends. He was particularly concerned with his personal development, which he often termed as 'rise'.⁶⁷⁴ Many of his entries were philosophical musings about life in wartime and ambitions for his future.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁶⁶ Clippings about American film stars, shows, art, and wider cultural and economic news occur throughout, for example D51/1/3 (1942), D51/1/6 (1942), D51/1/27 (1944), D51/1/34 (1945).

⁶⁶⁷ Lewis encountered these songs in films, broadcasts and record evenings (discussed further below).

⁶⁶⁸ For example, in February 1944 he included an envelope labelled 'Modern Tunes', inside which was a 2d pamphlet called 'No.14 Best Songs' which named and gave the lyrics to 'all the best songs sung and played' by the 'leading concert parties, radio artistes, and dance bands'. D51/1/34. Similarly, in April 1945, he included a pamphlet he described as 'hottest [*sic.*] DANCE -TUNES. the words'. D51/1/35.

⁶⁶⁹ 16/10/42, D51/1/1.

⁶⁷⁰ For example, on 11/12/42, Malcolm wrote an entry about a dance class Lewis had given him: in preparation for the evening's Tech Dance they 'practised all dances, including the Rhumba, Tango and Quick Waltz.' D51/1/4. Similarly, Malcolm corrected and added marginalia commentary to 'Diary 9' (D51/1/9), and from midway through 'Diary 10' started writing 'Summaries' or 'Ideas' of the week at Lewis's request (D51/1/10).

⁶⁷¹ For example, the third diary began with a set of questions for Malcolm on pacifism and war: 22/11/42, D51/1/3.

⁶⁷² 08/01/43, D51/1/8.

⁶⁷³ Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 3.

⁶⁷⁴ For example, Lewis was particularly concerned with his 'rise' as a 'dance floor personality'. 'Terminal Report', December 1942, D51/1/5.

⁶⁷⁵ For example, he contemplated his role in the war, thus far small, on 20/10/42, D51/1/1. The continuation of World War Two was also an important factor in his various plans for his future: 29/11/42, D51/1/3.

Indeed, the Second World War had a regular presence in Lewis's diaries, for example, in mentions of firewatching, and Malcolm's conscientious objector's tribunal, and he thought that their lives were connected to the war and war effort in many ways, every day.⁶⁷⁶ Therefore, as discussed below, it is striking how little comment on the Second World War there is within his entries on dancing, cinema-going, listening or other music-making.

Lewis quickly developed a system of creating periodic 'Terminal Reports' that divided up and reflected on the different areas of his life. His first 'Terminal Report', for the period October to December 1942, is an important document that demonstrates that music and cinema-going were integral parts of his life and future ambitions, as habits, inspiration and self-education.⁶⁷⁷ He divided the report into the headings events, work, pleasure, progress, emotional times, local ambitions, influences, inspiration, music, friends, and girls. The heading '3. PLEASURE' included cinema-going and dancing, and noted the frequency of his attendance and types of dance (see below), and their 'education value', respectively 'tremendous' and 'moderate'. This was followed by:

6. INSPIRATION :-

I am able to live and feel good things only for one reason, because I am inspired. The cinema is the cause of this; the cinema was and is the making of me. All push, ambitious zeals [*sic.*] [...] all came directly or indirectly as a result of the cinema, what I saw and felt. [...]

9. MUSIC :-

1. Films: highly touched and affected by music, of all sorts, in films.
2. Wireless: listener with enthusiasm: 100% taken up by programmes.
3. Piano: progress is poor, very slow, but clear; little time.
4. Stage: [and] 5. Opera: } must become more interested in this side. (take no interest at present).

There are several notable points here. Firstly, his remarks regarding inspiration reinforce the centrality of cinema-going to Lewis's experiences and life more broadly, and demonstrate that he

⁶⁷⁶ See discussions in December 1942, D51/1/3. Lewis wrote about firewatching duties on several occasions, for example 29/11/42 and 01/12/42, D51/1/3. Malcolm's tribunal and sentencing was a regular presence between October 1942 and October 1943, for example, 18/10/42, D51/1/1 and 04/10/43, D51/1/19.

⁶⁷⁷ 'Terminal Report', December 1942, D51/1/5.

sought not just entertainment but education from his cinematic experiences.⁶⁷⁸ Secondly, Lewis's acknowledgement that music 'touched and affected' him provides an interesting comparison with the models of listening discussed in Chapter 1 that promoted intellectual over emotional engagement. In particular, there is a striking contrast between Wilenski's distrust of the effect of music and Lewis's acceptance of it.⁶⁷⁹ The following analyses suggest that this was a feature of his expectations as a listener who privileged popular culture. Thirdly, it is interesting that he did not include dances within the different media of his musical experiences. Although he did occasionally mention the music when discussing dances (see below), this suggests that he thought of dance hall music in a different way to film and radio experience. This idea has considerable implications for the way his listening attitudes and engagement can be conceptualised in different environments.⁶⁸⁰ Finally, this report demonstrates that by 1942 Lewis had an interest in developing a taste for 'higher' culture, represented by theatre and opera. Between 1942 and 1945, his diaries document his aspirations as a musician and listener, which took two practical forms and related closely to his life ambitions.

Lewis primarily gained his musical education in Barry, guided by the tutelage of his friends Ewart and Gogga. From April 1943, Ewart offered Lewis rudimentary music appreciation lessons, with the assistance of records that he 'explained and illustrated'.⁶⁸¹ Lewis believed that learning 'classical music procedure [*sic.*]' would enable him to appreciate 'with more perspective' the cinematic music that inspired him.⁶⁸² This interest in classical music was also evident in the few 'serious' cultural events he was attending by late 1943.⁶⁸³ However, an interesting impression, discussed further below, is that classical music, and live music more generally, failed to engage Lewis as a listener. This chapter argues that this was likely a result of his deep attraction to the spectacle, glamour and intimacy of the cinema. The course of Lewis's wartime diaries also document his progress in learning to play the piano by ear. In March 1943, he wrote about himself as a beginner whose 'fiddling' on the piano led to a sense of wonderment at the feeling of making music.

⁶⁷⁸ This provides an interesting contrast with Glancy's argument about the function of cinema-going as escapism and entertainment, not education or opinion about America. Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*, 31–5.

⁶⁷⁹ See Wilenski, 'How I Listen to Music–II'.

⁶⁸⁰ With reference to Frith's typology of listening and attention, discussed in Chapter 1, that positions music as either dominant or subordinate to other features of an experience. Frith, 'More Than Meets the Ear'.

⁶⁸¹ 12/04/43, D51/1/12. See Chapter 1 for a discussion of the gramophone as a conventional tool for music appreciation.

⁶⁸² 11/04/43, D51/1/12.

⁶⁸³ For example, Lewis went to his first ballet on 23/10/43, in Manchester, declaring: 'I must gradually appreciate more about it. Boring in parts, to me, at present', D51/1/20. The following afternoon he went to see the Hallé Orchestra perform Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Delius, Smetana and Dvorak, and decided 'I couldn't see too much of the Hallé at present'. 24/10/43, D51/1/20.

Morning: fiddled [*sic.*] on piano, for 1 ½ hours ---- ge ----- these notes, ---“if” --- yer, this is the feeling, if I could --- just --- yer just do this or that --- or this --- yer --- boy --- music.⁶⁸⁴

This entry demonstrates the striking effect that ‘participatory’ listening experiences had upon him.⁶⁸⁵ It also shows the performative nature of his diary writing, constructed from speech-like colloquialisms to give a sense of the process of his thoughts and feelings as he played, similarly to an internal monologue. By September 1944, Lewis was considerably more proficient: ‘I am improving in leaps and bounds at the piano; I can almost play properly with two hands – I can at boogie-woogie’.⁶⁸⁶ His musical literacy remained limited however, and he predominantly learnt to play by ear: his knowledge of keys, for example, was restricted to their association with the repertoire of popular and light ‘tunes’ he had learnt by April 1945.⁶⁸⁷ Therefore, to some extent, Lewis was a ‘self-improving listener’ of the type discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. However, as he predominantly situated his education and desire to ‘rise’ within the sphere of popular culture, there are notable differences between his ambitions and the aspiration for ‘highbrow’ musical tastes more commonly denoted by the term.⁶⁸⁸

There are three features of Lewis’s diaries that provide important contextual detail for the analysis of his listening experiences, all of which relate to the manner of his diary writing. Firstly, his diaries offer a wealth of peripheral data about the cultural, social and economic environment of his experiences, and offer an interesting perspective on the regularity of his cinema-going and dancing habits. Like Bradley (see Chapter 3), Lewis was diligent about recording the details of his experiences, in particular the location and cost of his leisure activities. In Manchester, he regularly attended the Odeon cinema, but also went to the Gaumont, Regal and Grosvenor, and when in Barry went to the Tivoli or travelled into Cardiff.⁶⁸⁹ This suggests that he likely varied his cinema attendance to enable him to see a large number of films, as he went to the cinema ‘2 or 3 times a week’.⁶⁹⁰ He also went to a wide variety of dances at both the university (‘Informal’ and ‘Society’) and outside it: ‘Tech -, Plaza, Ritz, Empress, Apollo, St Mary’s (Marple)’.⁶⁹¹ The data in the diaries

⁶⁸⁴ 30/03/43, D51/1/12.

⁶⁸⁵ See Chapter 1, and Frith, ‘More Than Meets the Ear’.

⁶⁸⁶ 29/09/44, D51/1/28.

⁶⁸⁷ 06/04/45, D51/1/35. In this entry Lewis listed popular repertoire including swing classics like Glenn Miller’s ‘In the Mood’, middlebrow classics including ‘Moonlight --- by Tchaikovsky’ (in the key of D), and light songs like ‘Trees’. This represented a curious mixture of current and older repertoire. For example, the latter was a well-known 1930s song that remained prevalent in wartime community music-making (see below), although now mostly forgotten. See Nott, *Music for the People*, 206.

⁶⁸⁸ See for example, the discussion of a letter from Lady Peers in Chapter 2. See also Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, 213.

⁶⁸⁹ For example, on 09/04/43 Lewis went to the cinema in Cardiff twice, and saw four films including *East Side of Heaven* discussed below. D51/1/12.

⁶⁹⁰ ‘Terminal Report’, December 1942, D51/1/5.

⁶⁹¹ ‘Terminal Report’, December 1942, D51/1/5.

reveals that Lewis typically spent between 1 shilling (1/-) and 2 shillings and sixpence (2/6) for an evening's entertainment; dances and cinema tickets were most commonly 1/6.

Secondly, a significant consideration for evaluating Lewis's musical experiences is that he routinely recorded the date, day, time and location of his diary entries. For example, one entry began: 'October 26th (Monday). (Written at 10.30 p.m at 233). Just seen "HOLIDAY INN."' ⁶⁹² This demonstrates the immediacy of his diary writing as a response to his experiences, and is an important consideration for their style, language and content.

Thirdly, his linguistic choices performed an essential function in representing the nature of his engagement with musical experiences. Lewis employed a number of techniques as he wrote, which accentuated the effect of free-flowing spontaneity and an outpouring of thoughts and emotions. These included long dashes, which the following analyses argue were used to convey a sense of urgency, speechlessness, or pauses in conversation and thought; and speech-marks, used to portray both real conversations with friends, and parts of his own internal monologue. He also used number of colloquial expressions and appropriate terminology that demonstrated a knowledge of and conscious participation in American-influenced popular cinematic and musical cultures. ⁶⁹³ For example, 'number', 'tune', and '1st-class'; 'yer' and 'ge', which represented thought processes, or gave a speech-like quality; and 'boy', 'oh, boy' to express his delight. ⁶⁹⁴ Another pertinent phrase for understanding Lewis's engagement with film and music is 'gets me', ⁶⁹⁵ which he used to convey how he was 'taken up' in and identified with his musical experiences (discussed further below). ⁶⁹⁶ An important distinction is that whereas many of his entries were long evaluations, ⁶⁹⁷ powerful musical experiences often prompted only short responses, shaped by these idioms and techniques. This suggests that Lewis used them to convey a sense of his ongoing emotional arousal considering lengthy discussion to be unnecessary. ⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹² 26/10/42, D51/1/1. '233' was Lewis's shorthand for his Manchester address.

⁶⁹³ See Chapter 5. Glancy argues that the popular use of short Americanised expressions was 'the most overt demonstration of the cinema's influence' on the general public in the 1930s. Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*, 111–2.

⁶⁹⁴ The expression 'oh, boy' was a colloquial interjection of 'shock, surprise, excitement, [or] appreciation' typically used to show admiration or excitement, that originated in America and became popular in the interwar period. See *Oxford English Dictionary* online (accessed 11 April 2018).

⁶⁹⁵ 'Gets me' was another Americanism, a colloquial phrase that was generally understood to evoke the deep emotion aroused by an experience, or its thrall, attraction or appeal. See *Oxford English Dictionary* online (accessed 11 April 2018).

⁶⁹⁶ For example, 'as usual, absolutely taken up by the picture', 05/11/42, D51/1/1.

⁶⁹⁷ For example, on 07/03/43 Lewis wrote over six pages analysing the film *The Big Shot* (discussed below), D51/1/10.

⁶⁹⁸ As such, there are interesting implications relating to the understanding of musical experience as ongoing after the event, and into the process of documenting and remembering, as discussed in Burland and Pitts, *Coughing and Clapping*. See also Chapter 3.

2.2. Lewis's experiences of film music

As a regular cinema-goer, Lewis encountered a wide variety of films, and his diaries suggest that he had eclectic tastes in film genres and a dominant admiration for Hollywood films. Music featured in films in a variety of formats. In non-musical films, background music was used to amplify the mood and help define the genre.⁶⁹⁹ Musical films however, ranged from 'the film with the odd song-and-dance routine to the full-blown "musical" in which music is at the heart of the film' and included, variety shows, romances, musical comedies, operettas, and films about dance bands and orchestras.⁷⁰⁰ Musicals were a 'popular element of the cinema-going habit' in the 1930s and 1940s, and provided songs, dancing and showcase 'production numbers'.⁷⁰¹ Spectacle and performance were important elements of the genre, and Hollywood was famous for glamorous 'all singing, all dancing' spectacles.⁷⁰² A number of prominent musicians, particularly dance band leaders and singers such as Bing Crosby and Vera Lynn, linked their stardom as performers to the medium of film.⁷⁰³ Mundy argues that popular music on screen possesses a 'particular power [...] with its combination of the visual and the aural'.⁷⁰⁴

Most of Lewis's documented experiences of music at the cinema were prompted by his attendance at 'musical' films, and their songs were an integral component to his engagement with them. However, two examples from non-musical films deserve brief mention as they demonstrate that his musical awareness as a cinema-goer. They also show the broader influence that Hollywood films had on his self-hood and aspirations. Firstly, in March 1943 Lewis saw the crime drama *The Big Shot* (1942), starring Humphrey Bogart. His penultimate remark of a six-page analysis was about the role of music in his experience, and demonstrates that his awareness of it was enhancing:

Music took a special part, especially during the chases, and the gun battles. It make[s] it all the more lifeful [*sic.*] --- gave it a soul --- [...] all intensified by the music.⁷⁰⁵

This acknowledgement suggests that music was not necessarily a background element in his non-musical film experiences, but an integral component.⁷⁰⁶

⁶⁹⁹ David Neumeyer, 'Merging Genres in the 1940s: The Musical and the Dramatic Feature Film', *American Music* 22, no. 1 (2004), 123.

⁷⁰⁰ Stephan Guy, 'Calling All Stars: Musical Films in a Musical Decade', in *The Unknown 1930s: An Alternative History of the British Cinema, 1929–1939*, ed. Jeffrey Richards (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 99.

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 99; Jenkins, "'Say It with Firecrackers'", 316.

⁷⁰² John Mundy, *Popular Music on Screen: From the Hollywood Musical to Music Video* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 56. Guy, 'Calling All Stars', 99.

⁷⁰³ See Guthrie, 'Vera Lynn on Screen'.

⁷⁰⁴ Mundy, *Popular Music on Screen*.

⁷⁰⁵ 07/03/43, D51/1/10.

⁷⁰⁶ As mentioned in Chapter 1, this acknowledgement refutes Frith's assertion that cinema-going involves 'secondary listening', and supports the wider assertion that Lewis practised engaged, attentive and serious

The second example demonstrates the influence of Hollywood cinema on Lewis's sense of self and ambitions, which is a prominent theme of his diary entries, discussed in detail below. On 25 November 1942, Lewis saw *Dr Broadway* (1942), an adventure mystery film set in New York. He described it as

a film after my own heart; it took me again to New York [...] it again made me think of the possibilities ... I don't know how, but I will, make millions. That is my home; my heart beats in time with that place [...] everyone seems to be having a good time, an atmosphere of forwardness, no sleepiness of English countrysides [*sic.*], or fogs of towns, where a "good time" is a special occasion; to them, in New York, a good time is their life; boy, I'm merely growing up now.⁷⁰⁷

Whilst several scholars have asserted that most cinema-goers accepted Hollywood's representation of the American lifestyle as a fantasy, many of the following examples demonstrate that Lewis deeply identified with and was taken in by this idealisation.

This entry demonstrates that an important part of his admiration was a distinction between the austerity of wartime life in Britain and the perceived wealth, glamour, and effortless 'good time' to be had in America.⁷⁰⁸ It is probable that his aspiration for a constant 'good time' was related to his awkwardness with regard to dancing and socialising, which were well documented in his diaries.⁷⁰⁹ An American future was thus an important part of his constructed self-identity, and the certainty of his convictions⁷¹⁰ framed his efforts at self-development and 'rise'. He intended to 'form [him]self by conquering my weak points, and giving culture and other advancement to [his] better qualities' so that in America he would be able to 'conquer' the world.⁷¹¹ Although, as discussed below, his aims were often little more than vague sentiment, this desire was pervasive throughout the wartime years of his diary.

An important aspect of Lewis's experiences of musical films was that he recognised how central the music was for him. For example, the fifth time he saw the musical *Holiday Inn* (1942)⁷¹² on 27 November 1942, he concluded:

listening at the cinema, in which the visual and aural stimuli were equally integral. See Frith, 'More Than Meets the Ear'.

⁷⁰⁷ 25/11/42, D51/1/3.

⁷⁰⁸ See Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*, 23.

⁷⁰⁹ Lewis wrote regular, lengthy entries about dances and his complaints provide an interesting context for why he liked the cinematic environment, which offered entertainment without social pressure.

⁷¹⁰ Lewis described 'the surety in myself' that this was his future, and that 'absolutely nothing' would stand in his way. 25/11/42, D51/1/3.

⁷¹¹ 25/11/42, D51/1/3.

⁷¹² *Holiday Inn* is discussed further below. He noted his third viewing on 29/10/42 (D51/1/1) and fourth viewing on 23/11/42 (D51/1/3).

Found out something else about seeing pictures more than once. It is the music that I go more and more to see, feel and listen to. One can't feel so strongly emotionally for the events, etc, as one can the first time one sees a picture.⁷¹³

This comment suggests a striking similarity with the way Bradley discussed his 'first hearings' of repertoire and his desire to have repertoire available to build familiarity (see Chapter 3). Moreover, it supports the assertion that Lewis, like Bradley, was a serious, attentive listener. It is notable that he described a three-part manner of engaging with music – 'see, feel and listen to'. In particular, this suggests that the additional visual stimulation of the cinematic musical experience was equal to the act of listening. This presents another interesting contrast with Bradley's listening, the prominent elements of his experiences, and the manner of his engagement (see Chapter 3). As explored further below, emotional engagement was an integral part of the way Lewis experienced and responded to Hollywood musicals. He came to a similar conclusion again, almost two years later on 8 August 1944, after he had seen the musical comedy *Thank Your Lucky Stars* (1943) 'for the 6th, 7th or 8th time'. During his detailed analysis, he wrote:

I found that it IS the music that I am more and more in love with, what can it mean. [...] There was something satisfying, eating me up, as I saw this; it was a sort of envy, yet it wasn't because I loved it too much. Occasionally, one of their voices would predominate, and I would be most fully occupied in my worship --- the singing of one word [...] Yes, above all, it WAS the music. [...] Oh, bugger it! I ENJOYED this.⁷¹⁴

Interestingly, this example implies that he was uncertain about the reason for his musical admiration. The linguistic style of the entry also conveys a sense that he was processing his feelings and response as he wrote, and that (as Hinton suggested) his diary was enabling him to construct a meaningful narrative about the nuances of his emotional response. This also demonstrates that for Lewis, the effect of the experience continued long beyond leaving the cinema, and that presenting his experiences in his diary mediated, enhanced and shaped his relationship with the films as he relived them. This suggests that, as an outpouring of thoughts, his entries represent very truthful depictions of his musical experiences.

Given the centrality of the musical element to Lewis's cinematic experiences, it is notable that he felt that other cinema-goers, and specifically Malcolm, did not have the same type of attachment or engagement with music. This demonstrates that Lewis was very self-aware of his identity as a listener and music-lover within the wider community. For example, on 16 November 1942, Lewis presented a conversation he had with Malcolm after a visit to the cinema. He wrote

⁷¹³ 27/11/42, D51/1/3.

⁷¹⁴ 08/08/44, D51/1/27.

“Say, now look here, Malc ____ you’ve got te’ get te like music ____ honestly now, you like don’t know what your [*sic.*] missing” ____ Frank⁷¹⁵

This example is noteworthy because it demonstrates, as with the example of his piano playing above, the range of linguistic choices that Lewis made in constructing his diaries as a narrative. For example, here he faithfully represented his accent (‘got te’ get te like’) and the pauses in his speech, which enhanced the realism of the diary entry as an accurate representation of his experience.

The important conclusion however, is that he felt that appreciating music added an intrinsic quality to his life and experiences that others were missing. This was a sentiment he echoed on 24 December 1942, after he had seen *Those Kids from Town* (1942), a British propaganda film about evacuation. The film was an unusual source of wonderment for Lewis, as it was British, realist and war-themed. Strikingly, his entry suggests that he was not affected by the wartime storyline, which he described as ‘a very humorous story’, before discussing the class distinction between the characters. He made no correlation between the topical subject and his own wartime experiences, nor mentioned the influence of the Second World War on his response. He concluded his entry:

To me, the best parts of the film were when the girl, about 16, sang three different songs, one to her little sister, singing her to sleep, another to the Earl as he played the piano, and the third æ in the party, at the end of picture.

It surprises me how more people aren’t affected by this sort of thing; it absolutely gets me, I’m in a complete daze and dream, a sort of yearns [*sic.*], and wishful think, it’s a sort of long ponder of beauty during the period of song; it is these scenes which I remember, and look back upon.⁷¹⁶

His use of ‘more people’ suggests that he thought of himself as an unusual, minority listener in his emotional engagement.⁷¹⁷ The phrase ‘complete daze and dream’ also evocatively relates to the dominant escapist discourses discussed above that positioned films as ‘dreams’ in which cinema-goers purposefully sought fantasy and unreality. In contrast, Lewis applied this phrase to one of the more realist musical films he saw. This example also supports his conclusions above that the music was the central element in his cinematic experiences, through which the film ‘got’ him.

⁷¹⁵ 16/10/42, D51/1/1.

⁷¹⁶ 24/12/42, D51/1/6.

⁷¹⁷ This division between communities also relates to a distinction he made about sentimental and ‘hard’ people (discussed below with reference to *Holiday Inn*).

Moreover, it suggests that his mode of engagement was one of full immersion in deep multi-modal stimuli: aural, visual and referential.⁷¹⁸

Having established the way Lewis related to music in films, it is interesting to consider the effect of his affinity for an idealised America in a musical contest. For example on 15 November 1942 Lewis constructed his entry around the effect of the feature 'Wake up and Dream' on his aspirations:

Just seen "Wake up and Dream" (Gloria Joan) at Rusholme cinema; [...] Jolly good music picture, "Woodchopper's Ball" was in it; the Andrews Sisters were great, on their usual swing. This type of thing gets me: (I say to myself:

"I'll learn the piano, claranette [*sic.*], drums and other instruments; nothing is going to stop me; boy, that's the life ---- wait until I'm over there, that'll be the real life: the stage, music, dancing, girls, good and rightful thoughts coming into practice, big money, big name, etc, etc, all the joyousness of big town life ---- New York, Broadway, that's the place." -- ⁷¹⁹

This entry demonstrates that there was a significant musical component to his idealised future selfhood. It is notable that his musical aspirations were somewhat unspecific and unrealistic, given what his diaries also indicate about his skills (see above). This suggests that he wrote this entry whilst caught up in an emotional expression of desire and inspiration, demonstrating the effect of immediacy on his writing. The remaining paragraph of this entry discusses 'that inspiration' and how, with education and knowledge he 'will be ready to rise'. Linguistically, this echoes the sentiments of his entry about *Dr. Broadway*, suggesting that he sought 'the real life' in comparison to his present situation. Moreover, it emphasises the importance of New York as a symbolic destination for his ambitions.

A more realistic assessment of his musical future was demonstrated several months later, on 30 April 1943, after he had seen the musical film *Orchestra Wives* (1942).⁷²⁰ This is a notable entry because it combines several important features of his engagement with music and his style of diary writing: a list of four hit songs in the film ("AT LAST," "People like you and me" "A GIRL

⁷¹⁸ There are interesting correlations here to the discussion in Chapter 1 of Forster's 'wool-gathering' listening habits, as involving heteronomous, 'wavering' attention and performative sense-making. There is also a similarity to Vernon Lee's phrase 'immersion in an ambience', described in Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening'.

⁷¹⁹ 20/11/42, D51/1/2.

⁷²⁰ *Orchestra Wives* starred famous swing bandleader Glenn Miller and his band as the main characters of the plot. As one of the 'top American swing bands on record' Miller's band had many hit songs, several of which Lewis's diaries suggest he admired. Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 179.

FROM KALAMAZOO.” and “Serenade in Blue.””); a reference to his musical ambitions; and a notable description of the visceral, bodily effect that musical experience created:

“Oh boy --- that music, and that band.”

If ever music made me shiver, and have ‘spinal excitement’, this music did, especially the dramatizing of “At Last”, a superb show fox-trot, ----- boy, purely musical melody, of 1st class, top grade.

[...] I often think my future lays in this field, ----- but, of course, that would depend on my progress in that field in these coming years. I’m certainly going to make it one of my chief hobbies and/or pass-times.

I must learn some more instruments.⁷²¹

This entry is notable because it demonstrates much of the (Americanised) colloquial terminology that marks Lewis as actively knowledgeable about, and participating in dance music culture. For example, his knowledge of the foxtrot genre and use of the phrases ‘1st class’ and ‘top grade’, and in the entry above ‘on their usual swing’ (discussed further in Chapter 5). It also demonstrates the linguistic techniques he used to convey his excitement and admiration. An important consideration is the visceral physicality of his response, which he evocatively described as shivering and ‘spinal excitement’. This physicality presents an interesting contrast to the restrained, internalised experience of emotional engagement discussed in the surrounding chapters, and below with respect to the radio. The mention of his idealised future suggests that he had considered the deeper meaning of his experience in a more contemplative manner by the time he came to write this entry.⁷²²

A similar response is suggested by a strikingly brief entry he wrote on 9 April 1943 about the Hollywood musical comedy *East Side of Heaven* (1939). The film featured Bing Crosby, who was an iconic American star who had been familiar to British audiences in recordings and film since the early 1930s.⁷²³ Crosby was an extremely popular crooner of ‘universal appeal’, who had cultivated an effective, natural and relaxed persona at the microphone and onscreen.⁷²⁴ Lewis simply wrote ‘----- boy – New York, Bing --- music’.⁷²⁵ That he could encapsulate his entire experience in a single expression of appreciation for the music, star and location indicates how entrenched these sentiments were within him. Moreover, the brevity accentuates the power of

⁷²¹ 30/04/43, D51/1/13.

⁷²² Written at ‘10.20pm, 233’. D51/1/13.

⁷²³ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 192.

⁷²⁴ See *ibid.*, 137, 174.

⁷²⁵ 09/04/43, D51/1/12.

the experience, and suggests that he was perhaps lost for words. Either he could not say more, or it was not necessary, and these few words were sufficient to convey his experience.

Two further examples from Lewis's diaries conclude this analysis by returning to the question of the effect of the Second World War upon his musical experiences. As mentioned above, the war was remarkably absent from Lewis's discussions of his musical experiences in the cinema. Therefore, an opportunity to consider the influence of war from a different perspective is presented by a comparison between Lewis's first experiences of two very different hit Hollywood wartime musicals, *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942) and *Holiday Inn* (1942). Jenkins argues that both films were 'war musicals', as they were influenced by and designed for the wartime context, offering audiences different messages in their 'dual tasks of providing escapism and instilling a sense of duty as a priority for all'.⁷²⁶ Notably, both of these films starred Crosby. The musical, with its long stage history, was the film industry's 'most "unrealistic" genre', and as such, lent itself readily as a tool of the war effort.⁷²⁷ As with the popular music industry more widely, the film industries of both Britain and America interpreted their wartime duty as to provide morale-boosting, patriotic and propaganda vehicles for the war effort.

Star Spangled Rhythm was a musical comedy that was advertised as having 'more stars than there are in the flag', and an explicitly war-themed, patriotic plot that sought to emphasise collectiveness and build morale.⁷²⁸ Jenkins suggests that Hollywood surmised that 'the impact of these prevailing [war] themes would be even more dramatic if a film underlined its patriotic fervour with a stirring musical score'.⁷²⁹ *Star Spangled Rhythm* featured troop shows, factory work, and a flag-waving finale at Mount Rushmore, through which the vibrant spectacle was redirected as an exercise in patriotic solidarity and duty.⁷³⁰ Lewis saw the film on 29 April 1943. He did not write much about his experience, and his concluding comment suggests that (like Bradley) further experiences were required for full appreciation. Within his evaluation, he listed 10 scenes that he had liked, listing the actors and elements of each he had admired, four of which were musical:

My type ---- it made me shiver, my future --- oh boy. Full of stars, and musical and comedy settings. Some of the scenes I liked were:

3. Bing Crosby in the last scene of the film --- singing a song of freedom --- propaganda, but a good song. [...] 5. "Black Magic." ---- a song; a snowy scene; also on stage in naval

⁷²⁶ Jenkins, "'Say It with Firecrackers'", 316.

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*, 318. This 'parade of stars' format was hugely popular in the 1930s and 1940s. Guy, 'Calling All Stars', 103–4.

⁷²⁹ Jenkins, "'Say It with Firecrackers'", 318.

⁷³⁰ *Ibid.*, 320.

auditorium; best song; quite emotional. [...] 7. "The wing shift": scene in aircraft factory; great song --- boy --- that rhythm. 8. Rochester in a swing – jive – scene. [...]

I must see this film again, to let it thoroughly soak in; --- many songs, but not outstanding ones. [...] best ~~type of~~ film, of its type, for a long time.⁷³¹

Lewis's description of the scenes demonstrates that he understood, but did not appreciate, the patriotic element. This suggests that perhaps some of the ideological force of the film as an American wartime cultural product was lost on him as a British viewer.⁷³² The format and linguistic choices of his entry (including the phrases '--- oh boy' and '---boy' and the corrections he made) suggests that this entry acted as a list of first impressions, and that Lewis had yet to consider deeply his response and was caught up in his visceral, emotional reaction. Nevertheless, it is notable that given the overtly war-themed plot, he casually mentioned propaganda and aircraft factory scenes without any deeper consideration of how these elements might have been intended to influence him as a wartime viewer. Indeed, there is a remarkable impression that Lewis was so caught up in his engagement with the songs and stars that the patriotism went almost unnoticed.

Holiday Inn provides a contrasting example of a wartime musical. Jenkins argues that although it might seem an unlikely 'war' film in comparison to 'the blatant morale-building of the troop-show format', *Holiday Inn* was intended to function as light-hearted nostalgic escapism, based on 'the notion of holidays as repeated reminders of the nation's values'.⁷³³ It offered a sentimental, 'idyllic dream [...] an intimate, nostalgic vignette', which evoked the longing for an idealised peacetime that characterised wartime.⁷³⁴ For the audience, *Holiday Inn* offered comfort, romance and sentimentality, presented by stars Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire, both of whom had 'natural' personas that encouraged identification with their characters by the audience.⁷³⁵ Lewis first saw *Holiday Inn* on 26 October 1942. It was a film he favoured: he saw it at least five times over the next month (see above), and closely identified with the sentimentality, lifestyle and characters it portrayed.⁷³⁶

⁷³¹ 29/04/43, D51/1/12.

⁷³² Glancy has sought to understand the transnational relationship between Hollywood films and British audiences. He contends that 'cultural products are often shorn of their complexities when they leave their culture of origin', and therefore, cultural resonance and reference can be lost in the host culture. Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain*, 9.

⁷³³ Jenkins, "'Say It with Firecrackers'", 328.

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*, 328.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁶ Each time he discussed his favourite elements and songs, concluding on his fourth visit: 'a highly emotional picture --- "good music I reckons"'. 23/11/42, D51/1/3.

Just seen "HOLIDAY INN"[...] A marvellous picture for its music, and its hidden sentiment; a picture to be cynically laughed at by those hard, material, daylight people who are fighting the truth: but a touching and heart moving picture to those broad-minded people who yield to sentiment. Producers must be human marvels; the music just right, just there when needed, it ~~says~~ speaks for itself, it plays the emotions to be felt. It is nothing but an education to those who love films. I felt the cinema, after a few minutes of that film; my soul was in those of the screen, in Bing Crosby's voice, in Fred Astaire's feet [...] I felt all she [Marjory Reynolds] felt; to hold back ones tears is difficult; almost a problem of freezing one's sentiment, unless you want to break down. And then I think, it's funny but it makes you think, whenever you are moved, or inspired; Irving Berlin is a genius a master of emotion [...] nothing could stop a trickle surrounding my eyeball when I heard "A White Christmas", that's the greatness of these actors; why, I almost felt like shouting out the meaning of the titol [*sic.*] of the next song "Be careful -- it's my heart".

When you hear these, you come away from the cinema, still in that dream that you entered the scene in the picture. The more you can imagine yourself in the position of one of the actors, and feel what he feels, sing like he sings, dance like he dances, the more you will enjoy the film, the more you are affected, the more you are inspired [...]

Malcolm: go and see "Holiday Inn", and get an education in music, and the so many more things which that music expresses and what it expresses to YOU if you wish it to.⁷³⁷

Lewis wrote a lengthy evaluation of his experience, which demonstrates how deeply sentimentality triggered in him the ability to identify with the stars and the music. There are a number of interesting points. Firstly, despite their differences, there were evidently significant similarities in the way that Lewis experienced and related both films, in that their songs were an important part of his experiences and the way he represented them. Notably, Lewis was most attracted to the 'natural', 'unstaged' songs, such as 'Be Careful, It's My Heart', and 'White Christmas', which also achieved the most lasting success as independent songs in America and Britain.⁷³⁸ Secondly, it is interesting that Lewis identified most closely with the emotions of the female star, Marjorie Reynolds, which suggests that his primary connection was with the sentimentality she embodied. This presents a remarkable contrast to the gendered discourses that frame emotional engagement with films and their stars as a predominantly female narrative.⁷³⁹ (Notably, Lewis's emphasis on emotions throughout the diaries is comparable to the gendered narratives that position women as emotional in their wider self-expression and wartime

⁷³⁷ Lewis, 26/10/42, D51/1/1.

⁷³⁸ Jenkins, "'Say It with Firecrackers'", 328–9.

⁷³⁹ See above. In particular, McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*; Glancy, 'Picturegoer'.

experiences, in contrast to men.)⁷⁴⁰ Thirdly, the depth of his engagement is remarkable, in that he spoke of not just his emotions but his soul as aligned with the film and the characters, within minutes. Moreover, he described an uncontrollable physical aspect to his emotional response, ‘a trickle surrounding my eyeball’ and the urge to ‘shout out’ the sentiments. This suggests that this experience was completely multi-modal, as he responded emotionally, intellectually (he described the film as ‘nothing but an education’), spiritually, and physically. In this respect, *Holiday Inn* was a film that epitomised everything that Lewis admired about the cinema: education, sentimentality, deep engagement, and an idealised future lifestyle. Fourthly, it is notable that he directed parts of this entry, such as the last comment above, directly at Malcolm, and there is evidence that Malcolm read this entry as he included Marjorie Reynold’s name, signed with his initials. In this respect, this entry is unusual amongst Lewis’s representations of his cinema experiences because it was mediated and shaped by addressing his friend. Fifthly, it supports the assertion that Lewis was still aroused by the experience, ‘in that dream’, as he left the cinema and relived it in writing. Finally, as mentioned above, he drew a contrast between his own ‘broad-minded’ sentimentality and the wider communities of ‘hard, material, daylight people’ who fought the ‘truth’ of emotional engagement.

A comparison between the two films suggests that Lewis identified more closely with *Holiday Inn* because it embodied the sentimental, ‘good time’ lifestyle to which he aspired. In contrast, his experience of *Star Spangled Rhythm* failed to move beyond enthusiasm, implying that he may have had difficulty identifying with the war-dominated and military lifestyle it portrayed. This therefore suggests that the Second World War had an effect, albeit oblique, on Lewis’s experiences of the cinema, expressed by his longing for a better life.

3. Popular music and community

This section considers four types of popular music experience with respect to the different communities they occurred within. It begins with broadcast experiences, and examines the powerful effect of popular music with regard to favoured star performers and collective, shared experience. This is followed by a discussion of three aspects of live popular music, dancing, community singing and local variety concerts. Live popular music offered a very different type of experience. It was individual yet physically collective, often participatory, and its tangibly sociable atmospheres have been commonly connected with ideological messages of escapism and participation in the ‘people’s war’ ethos (see below).

This section argues that for listeners who enjoyed popular music, the experience of live music was framed by a very different set of standards, expectations and reactions than those of recorded

⁷⁴⁰ For example, see Noakes, *War and the British*.

(including cinematic) and broadcast music. This is most notably witnessed in Lewis's writing. It also argues that experiences of live music engendered a different type of engagement and response. Firstly, this section suggests that the communal, social aspect of dancing has an important effect on the way Lewis related to the music. Secondly, it argues that experiences of wartime singing were inherently conditioned by the Second World War, both because of the content of the songs, and because of the conditions under which they occurred. Thirdly, it argues that experiences of local variety concerts prompted a different, more critically active listening attitude. These accounts of listening reveal the listeners' preconceptions about performance, quality and the impact of the 'star' culture.

3.1. Listening to stars on the wireless

As suggested above, the dominant media for experiencing popular music during World War Two were the radio, gramophone and cinema. These media gave listeners access to and experience of top British and American singers and bandleaders. As the following examples suggest, experiencing favourite star performers invested radio listening with a sense of occasion that compelled appropriate behaviour and response. Popular music on the radio also 'enacted the sense of egalitarianism, community, and participation so important to the People's War', because it drew listeners together into real and imagined communities.⁷⁴¹ As discussed in Chapter 2, the format and style of many wartime BBC programmes encouraged a sense of collective experience.

Three examples illustrate these aspects of listening to popular music, the first of which comes from Lewis's diaries. In January 1943 he listened to a broadcast of pianist and dance band leader Caroll Gibbons on the BBC.⁷⁴² In contrast with other experiences of broadcasts that he documented, for which he only listed the songs,⁷⁴³ Gibbons provoked an emotional response:

have just heard Caroll Gibbons and his band (or should I say – "and his piano") on the wireless. That guy must be marvellous; it absolutely gets me. I feel that I want to do the same, as it is such a damn good thing to want to do, and be able to do.

"Boy ----- those chords!"⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴¹ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 4.

⁷⁴² Gibbons led one of the top 'sophisticated' 'name' British bands, who like Ambrose 'had defined the 1930s and continued to shape dance music during the war'. In the interwar period he had led The Savoy Orpheans, who offered 'classy presentation' of dance music. See *ibid.*, 25–6, 188.

⁷⁴³ For example, on 29/11/42 Lewis listened to broadcast by Anne Shelton called 'Introducing Anne'. He listed eight songs and provided some commentary, for example '(b.) "Every night about this time." (sort of song I like, a sentimental slow-foxtrot, with a romantic air).' However, he did not analyse his experience further. D51/1/3. Similarly, on 26/04/43, he listed five 'tunes' played by Jack Payne and his Orchestra, but made no comment. D51/1/12.

⁷⁴⁴ 05/01/43, D51/1/7.

The language of Lewis's response ('Boy -----' and 'absolutely gets me') was very similar to some of his cinematic experiences discussed above. However, this entry does not display the same rhapsodic musing as those about Hollywood musicals, which implies that the visual component was an integral part of his imagination and response. It is interesting that Lewis felt Gibbons 'must' be marvellous, rather than was, in order to 'get' him, as this suggests that he lacked the musical knowledge to judge its quality, and was primarily affected by his admiration and emotional response. It is notable that a purely musical experience also inspired his desire to become a musician. Moreover, this response supports the assertion that Lewis was primarily attracted to top-quality musicians and struggled to engage with experiences that were less skilled (see below).

As discussed above, popular music had a great potential power to affect the emotions of those who listened to it, a primary reason it was harnessed as an ideological vehicle during the Second World War. Alongside Lewis, other listeners responded emotionally to broadcast experiences of star musicians. For example, MO Diarist 5341 connected intimately with a performance by Gracie Fields that was broadcast on the radio in November 1939. She wrote

The stuff to give the troops – Gracie Fields. Heard her on the wireless giving a concert to the troops in France. She made me cry as usual – “When I grow too old to dream, I’ll have you to remember”. It was very impressive – the roar of the men’s voices as they laughed at some sally [*sic.*] as one man.⁷⁴⁵

There are three interesting elements here. Firstly, for Diarist 5341 tears were evidently an appropriate emotional response to her experience. This provides an interesting comparison with the idealised restraint the BBC expected of its audiences (see Chapter 1). Although Diarist 5341 wrote more eloquently than Lewis it is interesting to compare the contrasting ways they discussed their emotional reactions. During Lewis's experience of *Holiday Inn*, examined above, he too was moved to tears but portrayed this as more concealed behaviour ('a trickle surrounding my eyeball') in the context of restraining his emotional response. This suggests that this visible reaction had different connotations for Lewis in a public, although darkened, cinema, as opposed to Diarist 5341 as a female within a domestic environment, listening privately.

Secondly, a significant portion of her response was tied up with her previous experiences, and thus expectations, of Fields's star persona. This is evidenced by the words 'as usual', suggesting that emotional engagement with an experience of Fields was expected and welcomed. Fields was 'a cultural phenomenon', held in great esteem as a symbolic British star with a natural and

⁷⁴⁵ 15/11/39, Diarist 5341.

identifiable persona.⁷⁴⁶ She was a hugely successful patriotic tool for the nation throughout the Second World War, often because she tried to 'take people out of the war' with repertoire of nostalgic 'old favourites,' 'topically removed from the conflict.'⁷⁴⁷ For example, 'When I grow too old to dream' was a popular 1930s classic that had been recorded by several artists. However, many of Fields's best known 1930s songs, such as 'Wish me Luck as You Wave Me Goodbye', 'took on fresh meaning' and relevance in wartime.⁷⁴⁸ Interestingly, Baade suggests that a collective, tangible response to Fields was experienced widely. She describes how at a concert by Fields in October 1939, 'the live audience of soldiers and other war workers "broke the bonds of restraint and began to shout and cheer as they joined in the song"''.⁷⁴⁹

Thirdly, it is evident that Diarist 5341 was drawn into the troops' experience, sharing and participating with them through the temporary 'imagined community' the wireless created.⁷⁵⁰ In hearing the troops, and hearing Fields with them, her experience was enhanced, especially by their laughter and gaiety despite the wartime context. Moreover, it is likely that their identity as servicemen added a further poignancy to this experience, within two months of the start of the Second World War. Therefore, the affective power of the experience evidently resulted from a number of factors: a combination of the musical sentimentality, Field's stardom, wartime context, and the collective element of a shared emotional response. This suggests a type of listening engagement that was dependent on the context as much as the music. As such, there is a striking correlation to Herbert's discussions of listening as heteronomous, homogenous and contemplative, with a 'fluctuating attentional awareness'.⁷⁵¹

The third example presents a different type of reaction to a performance by Fields. Whilst still attesting to the importance of the star element of experience, the behaviour of the listeners that Diarist 5226 described suggests that the response and engagement was constrained by formal, decorous listening conventions despite the similar domestic environment. He wrote

So to Gracie Fields, mother forecast she'd sing "Rock of Ages"; instead she sang Malotte's "Lord's Prayer". Music only seemed to add sugar sentiment to simple petitions. Then she sang "There'll always be an England" and "Land of Hope and Glory", creating deep emotion in us all, only revealed by our silence. "God who made thee mighty, make thee

⁷⁴⁶ Jeffrey Richards, 'Fields, Dame Gracie (1898–1979)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online (accessed 24 September 2015).

⁷⁴⁷ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 42.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁷⁵⁰ See Chapter 2 and *ibid.*

⁷⁵¹ Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening'.

mightier yet," she sang, and, I thought, mighty not in possessions but in spirit. Stood for "God Save the King" Father and mother agreed Gracie was in good voice.⁷⁵²

This description demonstrates several things about the breadth of experiences of popular song. Firstly, the repertoire he chose to mention was dominated by traditional patriotic anthems and hymns, which likely added to the solemnity of the experience. Secondly, his observations of the listening experience and response are remarkable in contrast with Lewis, and suggest an attitude more akin to the BBC's recommended model of attentive listening discussed in Chapter 1, showing that the model did have some correlation with real listening practices. Deep emotion was restrained by silence, and the listeners stood respectfully together for the national anthem. Thirdly, it is likely that for Diarist 5226, sharing this experience with his parents mediated his reactions and behaviour, as well as the way he reported it to MO (the remainder of the entry records his parents' opinions). Fourthly, as with Diarist 5341 above, Diarist 5226 emphasised the collective experience, which therefore suggests that shared emotional connection was an important part of the response.⁷⁵³

These examples demonstrate that listening to stars generated expectations of quality and response. These in turn affected the relationship between listeners and popular music, and as explored below, had an important influence on the way they experienced similar repertoire in live, amateur contexts.

3.2. Listening at dances

As with cinema-going, dancing offered the public an important means of social leisure in wartime. Dancing was popular because 'it offered communal entertainment, and sociability', and appealed to people of all classes.⁷⁵⁴ Baade describes the Second World War as the 'culmination of jazz-derived social dance as a mass leisure activity', as it came to be valued by the public and authorities alike as 'healthful, morale-boosting amusement and for its enactment of potent ideals of cooperation for a nation at war.'⁷⁵⁵ There was an 'unprecedented demand' for dancing in wartime, and a 'boom' in attendance in part aided by the presence of American servicemen, who were affluent and keen dancers.⁷⁵⁶ For example, Nott estimated that around four million dancers attended dance halls per week in 1942.⁷⁵⁷ Many people, such as Lewis, danced several times a

⁷⁵² 17/08/41, Diarist 5226.

⁷⁵³ The discussion of collective responses as a significant component of an experience is discussed further in Chapter 5.

⁷⁵⁴ Nott, *Going to the Palais*, 53, 56.

⁷⁵⁵ Baade, "'The Dancing Front'", 351.

⁷⁵⁶ Nott, *Going to the Palais*, 49–52.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

week.⁷⁵⁸ Like the cinema, wartime offered an important participatory wartime escape, with an atmosphere of gaiety, normality and sociability that enabled people to forget the war: it was 'the opiate of the people'.⁷⁵⁹ Popular dances of the 1930s and 1940s included traditional ballroom styles such as the waltz, quickstep, foxtrot; 'party dances' such as the 'Lambeth Walk'; and jazz-influenced styles including the jitterbug and lindy hop.⁷⁶⁰ A prominent problem faced by the wartime dance hall industry was the availability of suitable musicians, following widespread conscription of the predominantly male dance band profession.⁷⁶¹ The shortage of musicians required adaptations, which ranged from the use of gramophones in smaller venues, to the use of all-female and military bands.⁷⁶² Dancers were therefore accompanied by bands of a wide range of abilities, from top name bands in sophisticated venues, to local semi-professionals.

There is little that can be said about the experience of music at dances, as of the listeners studied, only Lewis ever offered his opinions. This in itself is a notable point, and demonstrates much about the nature of musical experiences and engagement at dances.⁷⁶³ Although other diarists mentioned their experiences of dancing (see below), none thought to mention the musicians, songs or musical quality. Music at dances had a somewhat unique position: it was an integral accompanying element and defined the tempo and style of the dancing,⁷⁶⁴ and yet was simultaneously part of the background to the dominant social and physical activity. It was, to use Frith and Herbert's terms, a participatory and heteronomous musical experience.⁷⁶⁵

Lewis offers only a few insights. He was a regular dancer (as noted above), and frequently wrote long, reflective commentary about his experiences, the quality of the social scene and his own abilities. His diaries suggest that he struggled socially at dance halls, and perhaps therefore paid more attention to the music than other dancers might have done. An important contextual point is that the overwhelming majority of his diary entries about dancing do not mention the music. However, he also occasionally provided fleeting insight into the implicit importance of the music for the quality of his experiences. Three examples illustrate the different contexts in which he took enough notice of the music to record his thoughts. Strikingly, it was often in combination with the quality of overall entertainment, including socialising and dancing, that music appeared.

⁷⁵⁸ See MO FR11A, 'Jazz and Dancing', November 1939.

⁷⁵⁹ Martyn Beeny, 'Music Worth Fighting For: The Role of American Popular Music in the United States and the United Kingdom During World War II' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Kent, 2010), 243.

⁷⁶⁰ See Nott, *Music for the People*; Nott, *Going to the Palais*, 113–6; MO FR11A.

⁷⁶¹ *Going to the Palais*, 66–7.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*, 67.

⁷⁶³ As Frith argued, dancing is the most overlooked form of musical experience in the literature on listening. Frith, 'More Than Meets the Ear'. Equally, literature on dance music and social dancing focuses on economic, musical and social trends as opposed to the experience. For example, see Baade, "'The Dancing Front'"; Nott, *Going to the Palais*.

⁷⁶⁴ See Baade, "'The Dancing Front'"; Nott, *Going to the Palais*.

⁷⁶⁵ See Chapter 1.

In November 1942, he began his assessment of a university 'informal' dance: 'The dance was awful, the girls were terrible, and the music was dreadful, the fun was monotonous.'⁷⁶⁶ A month later in December 1942, he attended a 'Union Informal', which he summarised as: 'Didn't have very good time; stale faces, no room, and poor music make the enjoyment rather monotonous'.⁷⁶⁷ However, he followed this with a list of 'songs to remember', which included four quicksteps, seven 'slow foxtrots', and three waltzes. Notably, several of these songs were tunes that would have been familiar to him from the films he had recently seen and loved. For example, 'White Christmas' and 'Be careful, it's my heart', from *Holiday Inn*, were two of the 'slow foxtrots'. In January 1943 he wrote of an experience at a 'Tech Dance': 'I enjoyed this dance very much; the dancing was good, the band was great (slow-foxtrot was really marvellous)'.⁷⁶⁸ These examples suggest that he noticed the music when the band was either 'great' or 'dreadful', which suggests that it was only an important feature for him when it either enhanced or detracted from his enjoyment. A further example demonstrates that musical variety was important, and that he was reflective about the quality of different dance halls. In November 1924, he went to a non-University dance at the Ritz, Manchester, which he described in detail, suggesting it was perhaps his first visit. He wrote

Evening: just been to RITZ: [...] It is better than the Plaza, in so far as there are two bands, frequently changing, one every half hour about, one band being all women, the other all men, and there is a spectator's gallery.⁷⁶⁹

It is striking that Lewis never named the bands. With the exception of the fourth example, he also never indicated anything about them beyond the quality of their music, which suggests that they played a functional role, in contrast with the stars he admired, in allowing him to listen to the songs he enjoyed.

3.3. Experiences of community singing

By the late 1930s, community sing-a-longs were a traditional element of many musical gatherings, including the finales of variety concerts and music hall performances, and much of the wartime public would have been familiar with the idiom through first-hand experience. During the Second World War, community singing scenarios would also have been familiar to the public through 'media coverage' in films and broadcasts that sought to promote an idealised community spirit.⁷⁷⁰ Like dancing, community singing represented the 'participatory potential' of popular music, and

⁷⁶⁶ 28/11/42, D51/1/3.

⁷⁶⁷ 05/12/42, D51/1/2.

⁷⁶⁸ 22/01/43, D51/1/9.

⁷⁶⁹ 19/11/42, D51/1/2.

⁷⁷⁰ Guthrie, 'Vera Lynn on Screen', 262.

was emphasised and exploited for this reason by the film industry and BBC, and as an integral part of CEMA and ENSA events.⁷⁷¹ Moreover, audiences often joined in whether professionals or amateurs were performing, which enabled sing-a-longs to become 'a regular trope in wartime film and in broadcasts before live audiences'.⁷⁷² Baade argues that 'the sound of a multitude of voices joined together in singing popular songs [...] offered participants and listeners a living enactment' of the ethos and sentiment of the people's war mythology.⁷⁷³ Community singing was by nature a participatory listening experience, in which the distinction between performers and audience was blurred.⁷⁷⁴ As such, these experiences were fundamentally different from those studied in the surrounding chapters, in which the listeners were predominantly distinct from the performance of the music.

Several of the MO diarists recorded their experiences of community singing, which are considered in the following analysis. Community singing occurred in various environments, both spontaneously and in structured performances, and adopted a wide range of repertoire including classical anthems such as 'Land of Hope and Glory', popular World War One songs including 'Tipperary', light songs from the 1930s, and both patriotic and sentimental wartime songs. All were genuinely popular and well-known to the general public.⁷⁷⁵ Furthermore, they were 'singable' and their presence in community singing environments was often officially promoted.⁷⁷⁶

The first example is from Diarist 5228, who wrote about his experience of singing at the end of an 'eve of war' dance in August 1939. With respect to the discussion of Lewis and dancing above, it is noteworthy that the dance itself received little attention.

G and I went to a dance at the village hall. "Let's go to an eve of war hop," I suggested, being in the eat-drink-and-be-merry mood. We forgot things there, until an incident at the close of the dance reminded us of war. After the National Anthem had been played and sung a young fellow jumped on to the orchestra dais and shouted, "We must have 'Land of Hope and Glory'" Pianist obstinately closed down the piano and others put away their instruments.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 262. For a discussion of singing as part of CEMA and ENSA's performances, see Hayes, 'More Than "Music-While-You-Eat"?'.

⁷⁷² Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 4. For example, see Baade's discussion of a concert by Gracie Fields, above.

⁷⁷³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷⁷⁴ See Frith, 'More Than Meets the Ear'.

⁷⁷⁵ For a discussion of the popularity of song genres in wartime, see Cleveland, 'Singing Warriors'.

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 170.

"Very well, we'll sing it without music," he bawled. Everyone sang with greater gusto than they had sung the Anthem. Apart from patriotic associations I like it. I sang and enjo[y]ed every note.

Getting into bed I said to myself, "War or peace tomorrow? Oh hang it! It's a great life!"⁷⁷⁷

There are a number of notable considerations about this entry. Firstly, these comments unusually comprised an entire entry rather than being part of a longer, broader account. Moreover it was the first entry in his diary, suggesting the event had considerable significance for him. Secondly, he made a distinction between the dance as a vehicle for escape ('we forgot things there') and the singing as a reminder of the impending war. An important factor to this reminder would have been that the repertoire had historical, symbolic connotations, and as such created an unavoidable patriotic atmosphere. 'Land of Hope and Glory' would likely have been proposed for its patriotic associations. There is an interesting contrast between the conventional boundaries of singing the National Anthem, conveyed only briefly, and the spontaneity of the following experience, described in detail as more meaningful. Moreover, it is interesting that although he disliked the patriotic associations of the song, he was able to put this aside for his enjoyment (with similarity to Lewis's experience of *Star Spangled Rhythm*). Secondly, it is interesting that the patriotism of this moment inspired remarkably different responses in the different participants. The account suggests that for the professionals, the performance was a matter of duty or obligation; in contrast the audience, likely buoyed by 'forgetting things' and enjoying themselves, were inspired by the situation and eve of war context. Thirdly, the language he used, filled with strong colloquial expressions such as 'bawled' and 'gusto', suggests that conveying a sense of the (emotional) intensity of the experience and patriotic fervour of the audience was an important consideration in the way he represented it. It also contrasts with the casual brevity used to describe the dance itself.

Overall, the entry suggests that the context of the experience was a prominent factor in the impression it made on him. Reflection on the inevitability, and uncertainty, of the arrival of World War Two evidently formed an important element of his engagement with the music. Therefore, it was the combination of factors that together enhanced the experience: the collective enthusiasm, the atmosphere of rebellion against the 'actual' musicians, the spontaneity and sense of community through participation and shared emotion, the knowledge of being on the brink of war and uncertainty, and the song's patriotic associations. The totality of the experience therefore, was about much more than the music alone.

⁷⁷⁷ 26/08/39, Diarist 5228.

In contrast, well-known popular and light tunes featured in other experiences of spontaneous music-making. For example, a trip to the cinema in November 1939 took an unexpected turn for diarist 5205, as a result of the new physical environment of war. The presence of a piano and the participatory nature of singing provided an antidote, distraction and morale-boost that fundamentally altered his experience.

Went to cinema. Electricity supply was cut off owing to a barrage balloon breaking loose and its cable fouling some overhead electric cables. Sat in darkness for about an hour. Someone played a piano and the audience sang. Some of the songs were: There'll Always Be an England, Run, Rabbit, Run, Wish me Luck, Tipperary, South of the Border, and other popular songs, old and new⁷⁷⁸

The repertoire was an interesting mixture of patriotic and sentimental songs, which with the exception of 'There'll Always Be an England', were pre-war songs that had remained popular and gained a new topicality within the context of war.⁷⁷⁹ Notably, all the songs he named, with the exception of 'South of the Border' were British, and several had overt patriotic themes that were popular with civilians. Moreover, the presence of 'Tipperary' demonstrates the continued 'emotional universality' of popular wartime songs.⁷⁸⁰ This collection of songs accords with the assertion that at the start of the Second World War, the overall tone of popular music 'remained largely "bright and cheerful"', bracing and patriotic, in contrast to the later dominant sentimentality (see Chapter 2).⁷⁸¹ This tone was widely considered appropriate for wartime.

However, two examples demonstrate that the nuances and tones of different genres of war-themed songs were the subject of considerable discomfort for listeners. An entry by Diarist 5228 in November 1939 demonstrates that he did not appreciate the dominant patriotism of the early months of war:

I wish all dance music hadn't turned into semi-military stuff.

Songs like 'Kiss me Goodnight Sergeant Major' are bloody awful - and that's an understatement. I prefer straight lyrical dance music, even sentimental, but not Berlin or

⁷⁷⁸ 25/11/39, Diarist 5205.

⁷⁷⁹ 'There'll Always Be an England' was a patriotic march that became an immediate hit in the initial months of war. Cleveland argues that it promoted 'values of nationhood'. In contrast, Noel Gay's 'Run, Rabbit, Run', Gracie Field's 'Wish Me Luck' and the American hit 'South of the Border' were all popularised during 1939 by film and theatrical vehicles. 'Tipperary' was originally a music hall song that had become the iconic marching song of the First World War, and remained popular in the second. Notably, many older songs from previous wars were popular during the Second World War. See Cleveland, 'Singing Warriors', 163, 170–1; Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 44–5.

⁷⁸⁰ Cleveland, 'Singing Warriors', 163, 170.

⁷⁸¹ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 44–5.

Bust and Siegfried Line tripe. I like Ivor Novello's new song and Gracie Field's 'Wish me Luck'.

Another thing I don't like is the endless repetition of old war songs. They belong to a different war.....or is this a sequel to the last one ?⁷⁸²

Notably, the unabashed sentimentality, 'pure nostalgia', and themes of loss and longing of songs such as 'We'll Meet Again' (one of the most iconic songs of World War Two, popularised by Vera Lynn)⁷⁸³ were not necessarily appreciated either. For example, in February 1940, Diarist 5205 wrote a brief line in a business dominated entry:

'Some soldiers went by singing "We'll Meet Again". "What a song to sing", I said to S.'⁷⁸⁴

Despite its brevity, his comment on the experience is loaded and powerful. In recording this fleeting, informal and unstructured experience of singing in the street, Diarist 5205 reveals a significant amount of his sentiments about the Second World War in his reaction to the soldiers. Moreover, his comment demonstrates that it was not the music alone to which he reacted but the combination of contextual elements: the singers' occupation, the context of war, the public setting, and the song's hopeful lyrics. In the face of this overt identification of war in the soldiers and the song, this diarist's experience and reaction was conditioned by context. Baade argues that many popular songs written during World War Two 'entered into a mass-mediated oral tradition of popular broadcasts and sing-alongs' that were integral to their success.⁷⁸⁵ By singing informally and spontaneously, as well as in structured environments, the public perpetuated the success of hit wartime songs. Notably, the low keys and simple style of singing Lynn favoured in 'We'll Meet Again' were easy for amateurs to sing and as such it was a popular song perpetuated by the public as much as by Lynn.⁷⁸⁶ In contrast, many topical and comedic songs, had complex lives as living popular cultural products and were often sung with many local variations and parodies to convey different emotions or themes.⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁸² 16/11/39, Diarist 5228.

⁷⁸³ Baade describes 'We'll Meet Again' as 'the song of the war' for many Britons. Lynn recorded it in November 1939. Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 8. See also Cleveland, 'Singing Warriors', 163.

⁷⁸⁴ 20/02/40, Diarist 5205.

⁷⁸⁵ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 44.

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷⁸⁷ For example, one MO diarist wrote of the songs her children sang to ridicule Hitler, reversing the names every time 'so I don't know which is the correct version'. Tilly Rice, 24/04/40, quoted in Garfield, *We Are at War*, 204. Page's collection of the myriad versions of songs sung by servicemen during World War Two also exemplifies this. He explores the various nuances in the lyrics, adjusted to convey appropriate vulgarity, humour, adventure, 'topical parody', boredom and homesickness. Page, *Kiss Me Goodnight Sergeant Major*; Cleveland, 'Singing Warriors', 164–6.

A fourth example of spontaneous music making also illustrates how singing was used as a medium to cope with uncertain wartime environments, a connection one diarist explicitly made herself.

Returning late one evening to relations in the suburbs even the glimmer lights in my [tube] carriage failed and a group of people near me began to sing. They were not drunk. I do not know that they were even happy. Old Songs. Popular songs. 'On Ilkley Moor', 'Annie Laurie', 'Wish Me Luck', 'Auld Lang Syne'. A girl's fine soprano sprang into a descant above the leading tenor. I think that in the darkness the sense of what it might one night mean drew them to express their courage in the only medium they knew.⁷⁸⁸

It is notable that the listener chose to emphasise a variety of the old and popular songs, and moreover discussed a musical skill not present in the preceding examples. The explicit connection to the effect of war is notable amongst these examples. The reference to drunkenness was also echoed by another diarist,⁷⁸⁹ and suggests that listeners associated public singing closely with its context. Therefore singing in the late evening initially suggested inebriety rather than the wartime situation, in contrast to Diarist 5205's acceptance of soldiers singing in the street.

Alongside these spontaneous experiences, community singing was also regularly experienced in different leisure environments, as an organised endeavour.⁷⁹⁰ For example, in some locations, cinemas provided regular sing-a-longs in the intervals between features.⁷⁹¹ During the 1930s and 1940s, larger ('more pretentious') cinemas continued to provide 'interludes' or 'quasi-concerts' of popular, light and classical arrangements to complement film genres.⁷⁹² Diarist 5226 wrote regularly about his experiences of music in film interludes, and his entries suggest that they were as significant to his experience at the cinema. His accounts also demonstrate that the visual spectacle of the cinema organ at his local cinema, the Workington Ritz, was an important component that balanced the aural experience.⁷⁹³ These experiences provided more than a musical distraction. Audience members frequently sang along with the variety of old and new popular songs, transforming their cinema-going experiences into participatory music-making. For example,

⁷⁸⁸ Maggie Joy Blunt, 21/01/40, quoted in Garfield, *We Are at War*, 153.

⁷⁸⁹ Eileen Potter wrote about a group of older drunken people singing on the bus on 28/10/39, including numerous patriotic songs including 'Rule Britannia' and 'Sing me a Song of Bonnie Scotland'. Quoted in *ibid.*, 66.

⁷⁹⁰ For example, one MO diarist wrote about how her 'Soroptimist Club entertained a party from Erskine Hospital', which treated men wounded in the First World War. The community singing included appropriate topical songs from that war ('Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag' and 'Tipperary') and the group discussed 'how much better the songs in the last war were'. Pam Ashford, 19/02/40, quoted in *ibid.*, 173.

⁷⁹¹ See Chapter 1. For the history of live music in the cinema, see Ehrlich, *Harmonious Alliance; The Music Profession*.

⁷⁹² McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 387.

⁷⁹³ For example, on 08/08/41 he wrote: 'A Mickey Mouse, then the news; then the organ came up, its glass panels glowing green for the Irish Melodies which George Senior played'. Diarist 5226.

went to see "Second Chorus". [...] Like Tommy Dorsey better for swing; best tune was "The Love of my Life" though "Poor Mr. Chisholm" was a good tune. Girl in seat behind me had sung seriously to the organ as George S. played "When I grow too Old to Dream", "You will remember Vienna", "Blue Danube" (glass panels of organ changed to blue), and "Pagan Love Song" (panels changed to pink and scarlet, a contrast).⁷⁹⁴

Through from work to Workington at 4.30 bus. [...] met mother [...] Then to see "Sun Valley Serenade", a satisfying film. Knew all the music and liked Glen Miller's band. The organist played songs of this and the last war, some of which I ventured to sing.⁷⁹⁵

In listing his favourite 'tunes', and focusing on the musical elements of his experiences, Diarist 5226 demonstrated notable similarity to the relationship Lewis had with his cinema-going. Moreover, there is a notable contrast between his role as an observer in the first example, and his participation in the second, particularly considering the differing attention given to the songs. These examples demonstrate the wide range of repertoire the cinema-going public was familiar with, and the comfortable freedom to sing they felt within the setting of the cinema.

These experiences are striking examples of the power of participatory singing to draw people together, comfort, invigorate and display patriotism within the context of war. An important consideration is that these experiences were ones of temporary community, individuals and groups brought together by specific environments and temporal circumstances that heightened the sense of communality. Moreover, these conditions were often caused by an external wartime circumstance, for example, a broken barrage balloon or the blackout.⁷⁹⁶ Most suggest a natural, spontaneous community rather than the staged, or cultivated community evoked, for example, by singing at the end of variety concerts (see below) or the BBC message programmes (see Chapter 2). The spontaneity and construct of such experience meant that they were fundamentally different in nature: they were fluid, and their temporality was enhanced.

Moreover, several of the entries demonstrate that the context and moment were equally, or perhaps more, important to the effect of the experience than the content of the music heard or sung. Notably, what seems at first to be everyday experiences were actually sites of musical experience that had important war-related ideological value, which contested the boundaries of music-making and wartime values of community and patriotism. It is no surprise therefore, that wartime films such as *We'll Meet Again* (1942), starring Vera Lynn, sought to exploit this trope as

⁷⁹⁴ 24/09/41, Diarist 5226. Notably, the songs listed all significantly pre-dated the Second World War.

⁷⁹⁵ 08/05/42, Diarist 5226.

⁷⁹⁶ This accords with Guthrie's analysis of how a wartime context (an air-raid) heightened 'the sense of (temporary) community' for the theatre audience depicted in *We'll Meet Again* (1942). Guthrie, 'Vera Lynn on Screen', 262.

a means of reinforcing the value and relevance of popular music to the conflict.⁷⁹⁷ The matter-of-fact brevity with which these listeners discussed their experiences of community singing supports two contrasting assertions about their value. Firstly, it suggests that as a traditional form of music-making, they were also to some extent taken for granted as conventional wartime experiences. In contrast, analysis of their content demonstrates that they were actually complex sites of ideological tension and meaning-making, as both listening experiences and musical performances. This suggests that by participating in or observing, and subsequently recording experiences of community singing, these diarists were interacting with the 'people's war' mythology. Whether they did so consciously or not is unclear, but they all chose to record these events for MO, which implies that they considered them significant. However, there is an interesting contrast between the instances of participation and observation, suggesting that whilst community singing might have been a 'living enactment' of wartime values for some, for others it was a demonstration of the loss, longing and uncertainty that war had brought.

3.4. Listening at variety concerts

The MO diaries suggest that during the Second World War, community variety concerts were popular events given to raise funds for various aspects of the war effort.⁷⁹⁸ The war was thus a constant presence during such events, in both the content of their music and their purpose. Variety concerts showcased comedians and musicians of a wide range of talents, and featured light, popular and some middlebrow 'serious' music, often described as 'highbrow' (see Chapter 1). These events show a remarkably different, often hidden, side of musical life in Britain. They also present an interesting contrast with Bradley's experiences, descriptions, and attitude towards listening (see Chapter 3).

There are three examples, which raise several interesting themes: the contrast between representations of highbrow and popular repertory, the critical attention paid by listeners, and how these individuals positioned themselves with respect to other audience members. Diarist 5205 wrote about an experience in April 1940 of a variety concert 'organised by the local group of air-raid wardens' that resulted in 'a piece of typical British muddle'. He wrote:

The show itself suffered from lack of proper stage and curtain, but in any case was not of very high standard. There were no direct war jokes: [...] [only] a slightly humorous song about the black-out, "Frightened to come home in the dark" -an adaptation of an old song. [...] The 'highbrow' turns, however, received most applause, chiefly a soprano (sang

⁷⁹⁷ See *ibid.*

⁷⁹⁸ For example, one MO diarist wrote 'Last night a concert was given to raise funds to send gifts to all Port Isaac men serving with the forces. All the local talent was rallied'. Tilly Rice, 30/11/39, quoted in Garfield, *We Are at War*, 104.

"Shine Through My Dreams" and "Waltz of my Heart", encored both times), a rather vigorous baritone, and a violin and piano turn by two young men, no more than 16, who were announced as "these two youths" as though we had to allow for them being young, when in fact they were about the best turn. They played "Liebeslied" by Beethoven, were enthusiastically encored, and followed up with a Nocturne by somebody or other. It seems to me that most people, though they might not admit it, want really good entertainment to feel satisfied, not feeble jokes, songs, and sketches. One performer failed to turn up, another was late and came on last, combining his act (piano-accordion - well applauded) with community singing, but the lights were not put on so that the audience could read the song-sheets they had been given. Some of the community songs were "Roll out the Barrell" (inevitably), "The Quartermaster's stores," and "There'll Always Be an England." [...] Coming out I heard two people say they thought it was a very good show.⁷⁹⁹

There are several significant elements to this evaluation. Firstly, it is notable that despite valuing the 'highbrow turns', Diarist 5205 discussed little of the repertoire and the distinction was defined by the different instrumentation. Moreover, the phrase 'a Nocturne by somebody or other' suggests that he had little musical knowledge. Secondly, as with the letters to the BBC discussed in Chapter 2, there is a sense that he felt the need to justify his distaste to MO, which might have otherwise seemed unpatriotic given the wartime purpose of the event, by appealing to wider public taste: that most people to want 'really good entertainment'. Thirdly, this example also demonstrates the dominance of particular well-known songs in the community singing repertoire, and its regular centrality to musical experience in the community. Finally, the distinction between Diarist 5205's own evaluation of a 'muddle' of poor standards, and that of his fellow audience members of 'a very good show', suggests that he considered himself to be a more discerning listener and observer.

The second example is from the diaries of Lewis, who attended a variety concert in Barry whilst visiting during the Christmas holidays in 1942, which he described as 'moderate enjoyment'.⁸⁰⁰ The programme that Lewis preserved in his diary explains that the event was in aid of the Merchant Navy, and featured the Royal Air Force and Royal Army Service Corps Dance Orchestras, and a number of radio singers. At the beginning of his entry, Lewis recorded the names of 13 songs that were performed, which included the 'Warsaw Concerto. (most popular piece).', popular American swing and sentimental songs 'In the Mood' and 'White Christmas', and the light song 'Trees'. Underneath this, he listed five criticisms of the show, before describing his

⁷⁹⁹ 24/04/40, Diarist 5205.

⁸⁰⁰ 27/12/42, D51/1/6.

experience. His primary criticism was that there had been 'No personality; or originality; no individuality; nothing striking; nothing 1st class; nothing touching'. This suggests that he had high expectations of the quality of his musical experiences, likely influenced by his routine interaction with stars and cinematic culture. He also criticised the lack of comedy, leading personalities and good quality female performers ('girls who did come on were wrotten [*sic.*]'); and the 'wrotten' and 'moldy' quality of the music hall repertoire: 'which are sung to pieces in every music hall, in every variety, in every show where "any old' extra thing is wanted", people are so fed up of this, they are fed up also with the wrotten [*sic.*] singers'. He concluded his criticisms with the qualification 'N.B. I am definitely NOT being at all severe in my criticism'. Lewis described his experience as:

The show did not keep my attention, and (by what I could see) no-one else's [*sic.*], it was not alive, catly [*sic.*], on the go, or stirring in a light or deep way; one tended, in the middle of a song or piano recital, to half dream, look around, and become irritated: "oh I hope the next thing is good" type of attitude, and later on "oh drat --- hurry up, can't you".

Only in the case of 2 items was this not the case:

1. "Warsaw ~~Concierto~~": Concerto played on the piano: the most popular piece of classical music today; everyone likes this. [...]

The Bands drew favourable attention on occasions (E.G. "In the mood"), but even they got boring, if the [---] music is not so musical or rhythmical, as satisfies one's taste, or passion, or anything else you like.

As for the girl who sang "Sweet Mystery of Life," and other moldy [*sic.*] and sordid numbers, and the man who played "Trees" etc, and tried to sing at the same time, and the guy who tried to imitate George Formby, and other futile attempts, well "futile" describes what I think; they were dreary, they should never have been allowed on stage; with one fell swoop, they should have been crossed off the programme at the 1st rehearsal.⁸⁰¹

This experience suggests that live music did not engage Lewis in the way that the thrill, spectacle and intimacy of connecting with his favoured Hollywood stars at the cinema could. Importantly, it also provides a further demonstration that for Lewis, musical experience was expected to provide emotional engagement, to 'stir' him. The most significant contrast is that he was far more critical than about his cinema experiences, and his entry is comparable with shape and tone of popular

⁸⁰¹ 27/12/42, D51/1/6.

music reviews considered in Chapter 5. He also demonstrated a more nuanced listening ability and experience that has similarities with the distraction and evaluation portrayed in Forster's 'How I Listen to Music' article.⁸⁰² As with Diarist 5205, Lewis made several appeals to the tastes and response of the audience to support his assessments. It is notable that he portrayed his experience in strikingly contrasting language to his cinema-going, and chose evocative terms 'wrotten', 'moldy', 'futile' and 'dreary' to assert his negativity.

The third example is from Diarist 5186, who described one of several musical events he attended during the local 'Salute the Soldier' week in May 1944.

An amateur Variety Concert at the Hall this evening. After Monday's show I wondered whether I was too easily pleased, but tonight proves that my critical faculties are all there. An amateur edition of Two Ton Tessy who sang sentimental songs on one knee at the Vicar, who finished up by being the colour of a beetroot, or, rather, she tried to make some well known dance tunes sentimental – positively hurt from the quality of her voice and the manner of her singing. [...] Our Office House butler, a baritone, sang quite nicely "Trees" and "Passing By", but was obviously very nervous. There was a nice looking girl who played the piano-accordion quite nicely, old favourites, modern favourites, waltzes, etc., a woman flautist, quite good, and a man pianist who, in my estimation, was very good indeed.⁸⁰³

Notably, he was as unimpressed as Lewis at the standard of the event, and demonstrated that he considered it important to be a discerning, critical listener. He was more descriptive about the performers, suggesting that he paid attention as an observer, as well as by listening. However, he was also remarkably evaluative of the musical quality. The recurring use of the term 'amateur' suggests that, as with Lewis and Diarist 5205, any attachment to the repertoire was to the well-known versions performed by professional musicians, as opposed to the songs themselves.

There are several striking commonalities between these three diary entries. Firstly, whilst such events were often praised by listeners for their enterprise and support of the war effort, their musical offerings were simultaneously criticised. Interestingly, the entries also demonstrate a greater appreciation for the highbrow 'turns' in contrast with criticism of the merits of popular songs and their performers. Secondly, they involved a different, more critically aware mode of listening and evaluation, which contrasted with experiences of stars' performances. This suggests that these listeners felt more qualified to judge the talents of their peers, and presents a

⁸⁰² See Chapter 1. Forster, 'How I Listen to Music— I'.

⁸⁰³ 12/05/44, Diarist 5186. Given his opinions, it is notable that on 15/05 and 17/05 he remarked on the popularity of the 'Two Ton Tessie' amateur with colleagues, who was reported to have been scouted by the BBC.

comparison with the model of informed, intelligent listening (see Chapters 1 and 3). There are two conclusions that can be drawn from this. These entries imply that a standard of quality was expected, and not often received when 'all the local talent was rallied'.⁸⁰⁴ Moreover, by distancing themselves from the lowbrow vulgarity, and demonstrating the ability to be discerning, these diarists were conveying an important message about their own identities as listeners within the larger musical public. This presents an interesting comparison with the way listeners who wrote letters to the BBC carefully positioned their tastes within the established hierarchy (see Chapter 2).

Summary

This chapter has argued that the experience of popular music was inherently shaped by a number of features that range from the engagement with popular repertoire performed by favourite stars, to the ideological value of collective experience. Moreover, it has suggested that different types of experiences engendered highly contrasting attitudes towards listening and engagement with the music. This chapter argued that the extent to which Lewis dreamt of the idealised American life perpetuated by Hollywood films conditioned, and provided a frame for, not only his experiences and responses to film music but his relationship with popular music more widely. This chapter has argued that the Second World War had a remarkable influence on the material and ideological conditions of the experience of popular music. However, as with Bradley in Chapter 3, there is a noteworthy absence of direct mentions of the war in many of the diary entries examined, in particular those of Lewis.

⁸⁰⁴ Tilly Rice, 30/11/39, quoted in Garfield, *We Are at War*, 104.

Chapter 5: Listening experiences in professional reviews

This chapter examines experiences of listening to music in wartime as conveyed within published reviews of performances, which were predominantly written by professional music critics. It questions how the Second World War affected the form and focus of the reviews, by considering the critics' interactions with taste and cultural values; ideologies about wartime audiences and musical significance; and the linguistic styles that defined and separated their cultures.

Professional reviews published in newspapers and periodicals make a useful, complementary resource to the private accounts of listening experiences in the previous chapters, because their professionalism raises different questions of mediation, audience and language. They provide an alternative perspective on wartime music-making, written by listeners with a distinctive position within the music industry and different intentions. As the reviews were based in listening experience this provides an opportunity to examine their authenticity as sources with respect to the evaluations they convey, and the boundaries of their conventional form and content. This chapter is concerned with examining when war entered into reviews as an important element. It argues that the wartime context added a striking ideological background to the function of music reviewing that prompted the critics to address the social relevance of musical endeavours, and transcend the routine framework of a review.

This chapter has four parts. Firstly, a contextual introduction discusses the influence of professionalism in writing and experience, and defines the landscape of music criticism in the 1930s. Secondly, the chapter presents an analysis of reviews written within weeks of the recommence of classical concerts in London in October 1939, as a period with a unique context for music-making. Thirdly, a comparison of the language and cultural values of reviews of popular and serious music considers the relationships between musical cultures. Finally, the chapter returns to Lionel Bradley as an example of the readership of concert reviews, examining his relationship with the information and opinions they offered.

1. Music and criticism in the press

1.1. Professional listening and professional writing

Critical reviewing of musical performance, especially concerts, is one traditional definition of 'music criticism', the other definition more commonly refers to academic analysis of music aimed

at a formally trained audience.⁸⁰⁵ Reviews were written by 'music critics' for immediate publication in the press, and provided a news function by giving accounts of musical experiences. As such, they were aimed at 'a lay audience or for a group of both lay people and professional musicians', and provided non-technical discussion and evaluation.⁸⁰⁶ Schick defines music criticism in reviews as requiring *actualité*, 'timeliness', a relationship with current events and performances that 'helps differentiate music criticism from music history.'⁸⁰⁷

There are two elements to the professionalism of performance reviewing that are of interest here, which relate to the distinction between experiencing music and writing about it, as introduced in Chapter 1.⁸⁰⁸ Written reports about musical experience were mediated by the purpose, function and audience of the text, which for professional reviews was markedly distinct from personal accounts. An important consideration is that professionally written reviews were constructed within established frameworks for form and content, which frequently precluded the inherently personal element of the underlying experiences from being discussed. Broersma argues that form, style and tone are important in journalism because they construct the identity of the newspaper, encourage familiarity and comfort with the readers, and 'assure the ritual function of news'.⁸⁰⁹

The content of reviews was equally conventionalised, and critics primarily evaluated the music itself, and the performance. Shrum argues that there are five principal components of modern critical reviews,⁸¹⁰ which provide a useful model against which the changing priorities and tones of reviews written during the Second World War can be evaluated. Firstly, 'descriptive' elements 'provide information about the cultural object, the performers, the setting, and so forth', analogous to Brown's concept of 'peripheral data'.⁸¹¹ This was a central function of the review, and demonstrated what audiences should expect of their own experiences. Secondly, 'analytic' elements 'provide an interpretive context for understanding' through equation, metaphor, symbolic meaning and the 'construction of aesthetic significance'.⁸¹² Thirdly, 'entertainment' elements involve interwoven humour and outrage. Fourthly, 'explicit instruction', 'statements

⁸⁰⁵ Robert D. Schick, *Classical Music Criticism: With a Chapter on Reviewing Ethnic Music*, ed. Michael Saffle, *Perspectives in Music Criticism and Theory* (New York, London: Garland Publishing, 1996), 3.

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸⁰⁸ For example, see Cook, *Music, Imagination, and Culture*, 1.

⁸⁰⁹ Marcel Broersma, 'Form, Style and Journalistic Strategies: An Introduction', in *Form and Style in Journalism: European Newspapers and the Representation of News, 1880–2005*, ed. Marcel Broersma (Leuven: Paris and Dudley, 2007), ix.

⁸¹⁰ He suggests that the 'modern phase' of criticism gradually emerged over the 19th century as critics took an 'independent evaluative role [...] not necessarily to the liking of the performers'. Wesley Shrum, 'Critics and Publics: Cultural Mediation in Highbrow and Popular Performing Arts', *American Journal of Sociology* 97, no. 2 (1991), 350.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, 352. See also Brown, 'Analysing Listening Experiences'.

⁸¹² Shrum, 'Critics and Publics', 352.

prescribing styles, emphases, or alternatives for cultural producers', are implicit within the evaluation. Finally, 'evaluative' elements, positive or negative judgements, are scattered throughout the review as modifiers to the description. These components also provide an interesting perspective on the elements of the listening experience and their construction in text, as discussed in Chapter 3, against which Bradley's bulletins could be situated as amateur critical reviews (discussed further below).

There are two further considerations to the professional position of reviews, discussed in the following sections. The first consideration is whether or not reviews influenced the opinions and experiences of those who read them. The second consideration is to what extent professionalism affected or shaped the critics' preconceptions, experiences and evaluations of music. For example, by requiring a certain level of rational reflection and observation that differed from the practices of other listeners who also recorded their musical experiences with an immediacy and consistency, such as Lewis and Bradley.

It is widely acknowledged that professional music criticism has a position of authority and potential influence over the general public.⁸¹³ In a sense, music critics were the voice of the music industry, providing advertisement for, and evaluation of, its practices and music-making, although they also participated in it as listeners and audience members. Chapters 1 to 3 have discussed the influence of pedagogical media upon listeners' experiences and listening attitudes. This chapter discusses the musical press as an important component of these resources, which provided the public with regular information and opinion, and a framework of style and language for discussing musical experiences.

There are three sources that suggest contrasting perspectives on the effect of the critics' profession on their listening and responses. As shown in Chapter 1, the prevalent attitudes of the musical establishment of the 1930s framed listening as a skill that required appropriate training and knowledge. The critics of this period worked within this cultural environment, and their reviews suggest they practised the required 'serious' attitude and analytical ability prized by the connoisseurs of classical and popular music culture.⁸¹⁴ However, this listening was perhaps no different to how other enthusiasts, such as Bradley, listened. Therefore, the primarily distinguishing feature of critics was their cultural knowledge, or musical literacy, which enabled them to be authoritatively opinionated in the professional context. Section four below examines this distinction with relation to Bradley.

⁸¹³ For example, the LED project argues that reviews were written for publication and mass consumption with the 'intention of influencing public opinion', and have a premeditated quality. Trevor Herbert, 'Protocols for Inclusion', LED PT 2013-05-21 Paper 2, 2.

⁸¹⁴ See Chapter 1; also Frith, 'More Than Meets the Ear'.

In his 'How I Listen to Music' article the music critic Calvocoressi wrote 'I am, first and foremost, a music lover; and it is as such—as a listener pure and simple, not preoccupied with the job of work he will have to tackle later—that I shall attempt to describe myself'.⁸¹⁵ This suggests that for him, listening was not necessarily 'preoccupied' with the consideration of how to represent the experience later in a review. However, the purpose of this phrase within the context of the article, could equally suggest that under conventional listening circumstances, 'the job to do' was an important influence upon the tone and content of his observations as he listened. A different perspective is presented by a biography of well-known critic Neville Cardus (discussed below), which submits that he 'cultivated the art of listening and the ability to interpret for his readers what he heard'.⁸¹⁶ This suggests that his listening was distinct from the construction of his subsequent interpretation. Comments by Glock and Foss below, about the frequency of reviewing and the immediacy of written evaluations, also have implications for the complexity of the relationship between experience and writing. In contrast, Cook raises the concept of a 'professional listener', which he describes as one who cannot listen open-mindedly or naïvely.⁸¹⁷ This correlates to some extent with the description that Calvocoressi provided of himself, as a critic 'with peremptory, uncompromising opinions, not a few prejudices, and, I should say (comparing myself with those of my colleagues whose work I most admire) not a few blind spots'.⁸¹⁸ The reviews discussed below provide several examples that might be seen to exemplify this attitude.

These statements suggest that the relationship between the listening in which the critics engaged and their subsequent professional writing was complex and dependent on their personal practices and disposition. There are three questions that broadly map onto the cyclic process of influence and mediation before, during and after an experience, discussed in Chapter 3. Firstly, did their professional status and habitually opinionated writing lead them to approach their listening experiences in personally or culturally biased or premeditated ways? Secondly, were music critics preoccupied with 'the job to do' during their listening, and did this shape their experiences in terms of what they consciously noticed, or were influenced by? Thirdly, did their professionalism alter or mediate their experiences during the process of documenting them within the required conventional framework afterwards? The following analyses attempt to answer these questions by considering the reviews through the mediation of their professional construction and the

⁸¹⁵ Calvocoressi, 'How I Listen to Music–V'.

⁸¹⁶ Gerald M. D. Howat, 'Cardus, Sir (John Frederick) Neville (1888–1975)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online (accessed 14 October 2016).

⁸¹⁷ Cook, *Music, Imagination, and Culture*, 177.

⁸¹⁸ Calvocoressi, 'How I Listen to Music–V'.

messages they wished to convey, with specific relevance to the way music was valued ideologically and the contexts in which they might break from journalistic conventions.

1.2. The musical press

By the 1930s, 'newspapers were easily the most important form of mass communication in Britain' alongside the radio.⁸¹⁹ The press industry was divided between national and regional newspapers, published daily or weekly; and magazines, journals and periodicals, usually published weekly or monthly. Publications have been commonly categorised as either the 'intelligent' or highbrow press, or as the popular press, which catered to different demographics of the public; many had political, cultural or trade perspectives.⁸²⁰ The press 'addressed and appealed to audiences segmented on a variety of often overlapping levels', such as 'age, gender, income, leisure interests, class, as well as politics'.⁸²¹ There was also a long-established division between two idealised functions of the press that reflected the distinction between the 'intelligent' and popular papers, with striking similarity to the dual wartime ideologies of the BBC (see Chapter 2). The 'educational ideal' regarded the press as a 'powerful agent for improving individuals' by influencing their opinions and creating an arena for public discussion. In contrast, the 'representational ideal' argued that the press reflected, rather than influenced, public opinion, as the 'voice of the people'.⁸²²

The 1920s to 1940s have been described as a 'a halcyon time for the press' and the 'Golden Age' of the popular press, in which larger papers gained increased circulation and broadened their content, and the popular press provided the 'voice of the people'.⁸²³ During this period, newspaper reading was increasingly dominated by the daily London press, which was 'invariably called the "national press"', and the number of titles decreased.⁸²⁴ By 1939, the sales of national daily newspapers had grown to 10.6 million.⁸²⁵ Popular papers drew large numbers of lower- and middle-class readers, and their sales accounted for 'more than 70 per cent' of the aggregate circulations of the national press.⁸²⁶ The 'intelligent' press had a relatively small upper- and middle-class national readership. For example, of the top nine national dailies, the most popular national paper was the *Daily Express*, the readership (as opposed to the sales) for which rose from

⁸¹⁹ Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850–1950* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 2004), 39.

⁸²⁰ For example, *ibid.*, 42; Michael Bromley, 'Was It the *Mirror* Wot Won It? The Deveopment of the Tabloid Press During the Second World War', in '*Millions Like Us?* *British Culture in the Second World War*', ed. N. Hayes and J. Hill (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 98.

⁸²¹ Bromley, 'Was It the *Mirror* Wot Won It?', 96.

⁸²² Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain*, 9.

⁸²³ Bromley, 'Was It the *Mirror* Wot Won It?', 95.

⁸²⁴ By 1948 three newspaper conglomerates also controlled forty-eight percent of all circulation. McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 503; Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain*, 42.

⁸²⁵ *Visions of the Press in Britain*, 39.

⁸²⁶ Bromley, 'Was It the *Mirror* Wot Won It?', 98.

18.67 million in 1931–32 to 31.4 million in 1950. *The Times*, part of the intelligent press, had the smallest readership, which in the same period declined from 3.11 million to 1.9 million.⁸²⁷ McKibbin argues that the English ‘were a people of the press’: by the mid-1930s, ‘every 100 families in Britain bought 95 daily and 130 Sunday newspapers’.⁸²⁸ A wartime enquiry into civilian newspaper reading in 1943 suggested that despite disruptions that wartime caused to patterns of newspaper reading, ‘77 per cent of the population saw a morning paper “every day or most days”; 87 per cent saw a Sunday paper, “last Sunday”’.⁸²⁹

By the 1930s, the place of musical commentary in the press was long-established,⁸³⁰ and was published within a broad spectrum of the available publications. It was found in the intelligent and popular press, and in more specialised magazines, journals and periodicals that had musical, cultural or general focus. It was largely divided between critical feature articles, such as essays on music and composers; and music journalism. The latter included reviews of live music, including concerts and broadcasts; reviews of gramophone records; concert notices and advertisements; and regular columns that combined reviewing with critical commentary.⁸³¹ Newspaper music criticism had a long heritage stemming from the mid-eighteenth century, and its previously ‘cultivated minority audience’ had given way to a diverse mass readership.⁸³²

There has been a surprising lack of scholarly interest in the survey, history and cultural function of the musical press in this period, although the newspapers and magazines of the 1930s and 1940s are frequently used as primary sources and supporting evidence in the literature that examines historical music-making.⁸³³ Publications do exist on the earlier stages of music journalism,⁸³⁴ the history of music criticism (in the sense of music analysis),⁸³⁵ and publishing of sheet music in the press.⁸³⁶ Moreover, there are some useful studies of wartime magazines that supported equivalent audiences for popular culture, such as cinema-goers, who had similar cultural values and practices.⁸³⁷ Notably, there were also few contemporary surveys of the musical press and there was little organisation amongst the industry. As such, Hubert Foss’s critical review from 1930 of the scope, function and quality of contemporary music critics, press and literature is a

⁸²⁷ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 504.

⁸²⁸ *Ibid.*, 503.

⁸²⁹ ‘An Enquiry into Newspaper Reading Amongst the Civilian Population (June-July 1943)’, Wartime Social Survey NS no.37a, ii, quoted in *ibid.*, 503.

⁸³⁰ See McVeigh and Ehrlich, ‘The Modernisation of London Concert Life around 1900’, 97.

⁸³¹ See Bonny H. Miller, ‘A Mirror of Ages Past: The Publication of Music in Domestic Periodicals’, *Notes* 50, no. 3 (1994), 883.

⁸³² Schick, *Classical Music Criticism*, 4; Nigel Scaife, ‘Britain’ in ‘Criticism, #4: History to 1945’, *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online (accessed 17 June 2016).

⁸³³ For example, see Baade, *Victory through Harmony*; Guthrie, ‘Music and Cultural Values in 1940s Britain’.

⁸³⁴ McVeigh and Ehrlich, ‘The Modernisation of London Concert Life around 1900’.

⁸³⁵ Dale, *Music Analysis in Britain*.

⁸³⁶ Miller, ‘A Mirror of Ages Past’.

⁸³⁷ Glancy, ‘Picturegoer’.

valuable resource, despite its earlier date.⁸³⁸ Nevertheless, the overall absence of an overview suggests that knowledge of the available resources amongst the different musical audiences may have primarily existed as verbal or implicit cultural knowledge: as Foss wrote: 'we all talk of the critics; their name is on every tongue'.⁸³⁹

Concert reviews, primarily of classical music, were published in many of the national and regional papers of the intelligent press that were printed daily or weekly, usually the following morning or within a week of the event. These included daily London papers such as *The Times*, and regional papers including *The Manchester Guardian* (discussed below). *The Sunday Times* and *The Observer* were weekly papers that offered concert notices, and critical articles. The *Evening Standard* and *The Daily Telegraph* offered 'a regular weekly musical page, usually consisting of three columns surrounded by advertisements'.⁸⁴⁰ *The Spectator* bridged the cultural boundaries by containing weekly 'high culture' and monthly 'popular music' columns. The populist magazine *Picture Post* provided occasional photo-journalistic commentary on wartime music and the ordinary activities of ordinary people. The BBC published weekly the *Radio Times*, which had an enormous readership and printed official broadcasting schedules with annotations, and informative musical articles;⁸⁴¹ and *The Listener*, which offered commentary on cultural broadcasting and featured a regular column on broadcast music. Other sources with long-running music columns included the *New Statesman and Nation*, a political journal favoured by Bradley (see below).

Specialist music journals, usually published monthly, had a wider scope of critical and review articles but far smaller circulation, and catered for different communities defined by profession or tastes in music.⁸⁴² Their content included technical, professional and practical advice, academic debate, literature reviews, and lively 'post-bag' sections. These included *Music and Letters*, *The Musical Times*, *Gramophone*, *Musical Quarterly*, *Musical Opinion*, *Musical Standard*, the Musical Union's *Monthly Musical Record*, *Musical Trade Review*, *British Bandsman*, *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, *Music Educators Journal*, *Music Teacher*, *Organ*, *The Pianomaker and Music Seller*, *Dancing Times*, *Melody Maker*, *Band Wagon*, and many others.⁸⁴³

Foss accused the newspapers in 1930 of only paying 'scanty attention to the music' in 'occasional chronicles' as compared to film and drama, and argued that the 'system' of the time was at fault

⁸³⁸ Hubert J. Foss, 'The Musical Press in England To-day', *Music & Letters* 11, no. 20 (1930).

⁸³⁹ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁸⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 137. By 1950 the *Radio Times* was read by 'over 20 million people'. McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 503.

⁸⁴² Foss, 'The Musical Press in England To-day', 135.

⁸⁴³ This list was amalgamated from a number of sources, including *ibid.*; Baade, "'The Dancing Front'"; *Victory through Harmony*; Nott, *Music for the People*; Guthrie, 'Music and Cultural Values in 1940s Britain'.

for the standard of criticism.⁸⁴⁴ Each publication had its own editorial approach, and whereas some merely listed the most important concerts of the week with a few comments, others 'with more musical bias' were selective and gave detailed accounts.⁸⁴⁵ Most of the larger papers had permanent music critics, although their roles often included publicity and the selection of announcements, and some covered other subjects as well (for example, Neville Cardus also wrote about cricket). Provincial papers had a different system: fewer concerts allowed for increased attention, and London events were regularly covered by representatives who sent reports by telegram to several papers.⁸⁴⁶

Foss contended that 'the so-called musical critic' in London was expected to give 'an interesting account' of the many concerts that occurred in the capital; however, their knowledge and skill was irrelevant because 'no critical standard is exacted of him and no one cares if he is wrong. It is just news'.⁸⁴⁷ He argued that reviews were corrupted by musical snobbery, lack of permanent standards, and the speed with which they were written. He described the process as: 'at some late hour of the night, [critics] must make up their minds what they think, or, at least, what they are going to say [...] the "opinions" must be made quickly, without investigation, and recorded immediately, without regard to style'.⁸⁴⁸ This idea has implications for the relationship between the professionalism and authenticity of reviews as evidence of listening experiences. Moreover, there is a notable similarity with the immediacy of writing by amateurs such as Bradley and Lewis (see Chapters 3 and 4).

In the 1930s musical criticism was dominated by a limited number of voices and views, a feature Foss also criticised. Most papers featured the same solitary critic every week, although some invited outside contributions from the wider musical establishment. Therefore, a number of critics rose to prominence, including several without formal musical training. Critics of classical music included Ernest Newman, Eric Blom, Neville Cardus, William Glock, Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi and Felix Aprahamian; popular music was dominated by Edgar Jackson and Spike Hughes. As Calvocoressi's 'How I Listen to Music' article acknowledged (see above), personal biases, tastes, ideologies and politics formed a part of their opinions. Yet reviewing was predominantly dedicated to acknowledging and promoting the 'best' in music; however that was defined within different musical sub-genres. A comment by Glock, illustrating his process and role as a critic, demonstrates that in wartime it was not always an easy task:

⁸⁴⁴ Foss, 'The Musical Press in England to-Day', 132.

⁸⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁸⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁸⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁸⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 133–4.

Before the war I used to hear 300 concerts a year, and tried to describe them as succinctly as I could. Nowadays, if I am unlucky enough to hear one of our younger pianists pounding his way through the Paganini Variations so that not a single bar suggests intelligence on his part or serious teaching on the part of others, I keep strict silence. There is no room for careful analysis of the third-rate.⁸⁴⁹

An important consideration is that despite their basis in musical experience, a dominant feature of critical reviews was a discussion of the music itself, not the evaluation of performance, reception or experience. Discussion of the music could provide ‘concrete information’ or analysis intended to inform the readers. However regular columns often used performances to launch a detailed discussion of musical theory, practice or history, or air a grievance.⁸⁵⁰ For example, an article written by J.A. Westrup for *The Listener*, titled ‘Broadcast Music: Schumann and the Metronome’, is primarily an analysis of metronome marks and their use in recorded and live broadcast performances. The article was part of his regular column ‘Critic on the Hearth’. Of the actual performance he experienced, Schumann’s Piano Concerto no.1 by Myra Hess, Westrup only commented in conclusion: ‘The argument does not affect the quality of Miss Hess’s playing, which was as gracious and lucid as ever’.⁸⁵¹ Although Westrup’s thoughts on tempi were evidently part of his response to his experience of the concert, they demonstrate how the structure and function of reviewing could be fundamentally different to privately documented reports of listening experiences, and must be taken into account when analysing these sources.

1.3. Narrowing the scope

A major challenge of using professional music reviews as sources of evidence for listening experiences is the quantity of material. As the preceding section suggests, a vast variety and volume of professional writing about music was created during World War Two. For example, a search of *The Times* online archive reveals over 14,500 articles containing the terms ‘music’ or ‘concert’ for the period 1939 to 1945, including concert notifications, music honours, letters, feature articles and even articles about military and foreign affairs. An advanced search narrowing this to the ‘Reviews’ section indicates that more than 2,400 reviews were written during the Second World War by just one paper.⁸⁵²

Therefore, to narrow the scope to an acceptable scale for this chapter, the body of sources was limited in several ways. Firstly, to a small number of publications from the ‘intelligent’ press, which primarily wrote about serious music. These include identifiable newspapers from those

⁸⁴⁹ ‘Music’, *The Observer*, William Glock, 07/01/45, 2.

⁸⁵⁰ Schick, *Classical Music Criticism*, 23–24.

⁸⁵¹ ‘Broadcast Music: Schumann and the Metronome’, *The Listener*, J.A. Westrup, 09/11/39, 936.

⁸⁵² This corresponds to approximately 350 reviews per year, in line with Glock’s comment above.

clipped and preserved by Bradley, enabling comparison with his experiences (see below). They are *The Listener*, *The Manchester Guardian*, *The Observer*, and *The Times*.⁸⁵³ Although, as discussed above, readership of *The Times* was significantly lower than of national popular papers, it was widely read during the war, a figurehead of the highbrow press, and with particular relevance to a discussion of Bradley's experiences, was reportedly his favourite newspaper.⁸⁵⁴ A contrasting perspective on popular culture is provided by *Melody Maker*, an important specialist popular music magazine established in 1926, that defined itself as a 'weekly magazine-newspaper for all who are directly or indirectly interested in the production of light and popular music'.⁸⁵⁵ *Melody Maker* primarily catered to the British dance music profession and rhythm-club movement, providing a forum and resource for jazz enthusiasts, with tips for semi-professional musicians and amateurs. Regular columns dealt with commercial dance music and more specialised 'hot' dance music, jazz and swing, and reviewed records of both American and British bands.⁸⁵⁶ Articles from these five publications, throughout the war, have been discussed thematically, with reference to the influence of war, professionalism, language and cultural practices.

Secondly, within these papers a particular focus has been given to reviews written during the unsettling initial weeks of war, particularly October 1939 when music-making resumed. A considerable benefit of the widespread culture of concert reviewing is that multiple accounts exist for many performances of serious music, reported in both national and regional papers. This was a dramatic and significant moment for music in World War Two, and as suggested in the Introduction, one immediately laden with ideological value. A comparison of multiple reviews written about two events examines this significance.

There are several other limiting factors. Only reviews of live performances, including those broadcast live, are considered; gramophone record columns have been excluded because they primarily reviewed a product, with a greater focus on evaluating the music. These publications took differing editorial attitudes towards the identification of their critics according to the familiarity or objectivity they wished to convey. Therefore, not every review's author can be identified.⁸⁵⁷ This is an important point that complicated the relationship of the professional and personal elements in the reviews.

⁸⁵³ One review from an unknown publication is also analysed, which had been preserved as a clipping in the Bradley archive. It potentially came from *The New Statesman*, which Bradley's bulletins mention he read.

⁸⁵⁴ Joan Bailey indicates this in 'One Man's War', 6:30–7:30. *The Times* is also prevalent within Bradley's surviving newspaper clippings.

⁸⁵⁵ *Melody Maker* letter-head, 24 March 1939, MO TC 38: 'Music, Dancing and Jazz 1939–41': 38-5-A.

⁸⁵⁶ Baade, "'The Dancing Front'", 349.

⁸⁵⁷ *The Times* and *Sunday Times* reviews are anonymous; *The Manchester Guardian's* articles are either anonymous, initialled, or 'From our London Staff'; with some exceptions, *Melody Maker's* critics largely wrote under pseudonyms such as 'Mike', 'Detector' (radio criticism) and 'Corny' (commercial record reviews); *The Observer* and *The Listener* however, identified their often changing critics and feature writers.

2. Reviewing in the first weeks of wartime

Wartime created a situation in which music journalism, as with the music industry as a whole, found itself in a state of flux. Although most publications retained their critics and columns, the Second World War had a definite impact on newspaper production and circulation, and the music-making they covered. The previously independent press was hampered by censorship ('overt interaction in press content') and paper shortages.⁸⁵⁸ Newspapers and magazines were forced to reduce their size and content, particularly photographic, or subscription lists to accommodate the paper shortage. This resulted in dramatically different appearances, particularly for previously glossy publications.⁸⁵⁹ Many smaller magazines and periodicals merged with their competition, or changed their regularity and cost.⁸⁶⁰ For example, *Melody Maker* merged with *Rhythm* from the outset of war. Between September and November 1939 it also briefly toyed with becoming 'a high class sixpenny monthly magazine', which it assured its readers that it would be 'as much in touch as ever with the pulse of modern musical conditions', before resuming a weekly threepence service from 2 December 1939.⁸⁶¹ Moreover, many regular contributors left their positions, often to take up military service or war-work. For example, *The Observer's* chief music critic William Glock joined the RAF in 1941, although he maintained a fortnightly column titled 'Music', 'often at the cost of his sleep'.⁸⁶² Neville Cardus, *The Manchester Guardian's* chief music critic since 1927, moved to Australia in 1940 and wrote for Melbourne's *The Herald*, only returning to England in 1949.⁸⁶³

Two events within weeks of the re-institution of concert-going in London provide an interesting view of the way critics interacted with developing ideologies about wartime musical experience (see Chapter 1).⁸⁶⁴ The first of these was a performance of Beethoven's 'Appassionata' Sonata and other repertoire by Myra Hess, at the first National Gallery lunchtime concert on Tuesday 10 October 1939. As suggested in the Introduction, these recitals were events that rapidly gained ideological significance as 'morale-boosting' and as evidence of cultural uplift.⁸⁶⁵ The recital received considerable coverage in the press.⁸⁶⁶ The following analyses suggest that the recent

⁸⁵⁸ Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain*, 41–2.

⁸⁵⁹ Glancy, 'Picturegoer', 459.

⁸⁶⁰ See also *ibid.*, 458.

⁸⁶¹ "'M.M". And "Rhythm" Merge into One Wartime Monthly', *Melody Maker*, Mathison Brooks, 09/09/39.

⁸⁶² Hugh Wood, 'Glock, Sir William Frederick (1908–2000)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online (accessed 14 October 2016).

⁸⁶³ Gerald M. D. Howat, 'Cardus, Sir (John Frederick) Neville (1888–1975)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online (accessed 14 October 2016).

⁸⁶⁴ Chapter 3 outlines the context of these two events within London's serious music culture.

⁸⁶⁵ Morris, 'Battle for Music', 36.

⁸⁶⁶ Five reviews are analysed here: four printed in *The Times* on 11/10/39, *The Manchester Guardian* on 11/10/39 and 16/10/39, *The Listener* on 02/11/39; and an unidentified review, with no title or date, preserved with Bradley's bulletin for 10/10/39, LJHB 02/039. Bradley also clipped the review from *The Times*.

dearth of concerts created a renewed sense of the importance of music, which was portrayed in the press through evocations of the deep, collective engagement of audiences. As discussed in Chapter 3, Bradley attended the afternoon repeat of this recital, and elements of his experience are compared with the reviews, below. The second event was a performance of Beethoven's Emperor Concerto by Moiseiwitsch with the LSO and Sir Henry Wood at the Queen's Hall, days later on Saturday 14 October.⁸⁶⁷ The reviews of these concerts provide interesting comparisons between the perspectives and representations of experiences of different critics, with specific reference to the message they wished to convey, and the use of personal testimony in critical reviews when discussing emotional engagement. The two events are notable for the prominence of Beethoven in their programmes, alongside Schubert, Scarlatti, Bach, Brahms, Elgar and Dohnanyi, and the centrality of his music to the deep meaning and value described in the reviews. Morris argues that 'the main preoccupation was simply to ensure that any kind of music continued to be performed' in London, and suggests that the ideological value of Beethoven during the Second World War for the British and the Nazis was, at this stage, subsumed by the battle for 'ordinary survival'.⁸⁶⁸ The following analyses consider this with respect to the ideological status granted to the resumption of concert-going.

2.1. Myra Hess, ideology and the audience

Hess' performance was first reported on the following day, in *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian*. The critics of these two reviews both favoured an objective tone to which their anonymity lent itself, and retained impartial roles as observers. As the audience was a prominent feature of all five reviews of the concert, this impartiality creates the sense that critics were outside of the collective experience and response they ascribed to the audience. These two reviews provide interesting examples of how journalistic style prevailed against the representation of the personal experience. *The Times* critic wrote

Miss Myra Hess, who has been the prime mover in the scheme, led off very appropriately with a piano recital. The programme was neatly constructed with two sonatas of Scarlatti, two Preludes and Fugues of Bach, Beethoven's Appassionata Sonata, and some dances of Schubert, the sort of thing that could be listened to easily and yet attentively in informal conditions. The attentiveness of the audience in the quiet building was especially noticeable in view of the number of those who were standing, and the acoustics, which may need to be tested from various angles for different types of programme, were at any rate sufficiently good to enable all the passage-work in the slow movement of the

⁸⁶⁷ Two reviews are analysed, from *The Observer* on 15/10/39, and *The Manchester Guardian* on 16/10/39 (in the same article as above).

⁸⁶⁸ Morris, 'Battle for Music', 38–40.

Appassionata to be clearly heard at a distance. The piano was set back against a curtain across the far transept so that any confusion from the shape of the dome was avoided and the presence of a large audience absorbed any excess of reverberation from the marble floor.

The audience at the afternoon concert was smaller, though there were enough people present to warrant the belief that the leisured as well as the workers are glad once more to hear music. Miss Hess repeated her programme, and the serenity of Scarlatti and Bach could be the better appreciated in the more spacious atmosphere. The acoustics were again proved satisfactory by the clarity of the part-playing in Bach. Plainly the National Gallery, deserted by one Art, has found a new function in the service of another.⁸⁶⁹

The review emphasises two important, distinctive elements of the experience: the new ‘informal conditions’, and the size and attentive behaviour of the audience. As such, it features a large number of descriptive elements, demonstrating the importance of its news function to inform the public of the pertinent details of the new venue, specifically the acoustics. Given Bradley’s own interest in the influence of acoustics on listening experiences (see Chapter 3), it is unsurprising that he preserved this informative review. Notably, it was also the only review that provided this information. The review also included an image on a later page of the paper showing an overflowing audience and stage in the distance, which similarly emphasised the audience with a caption noting their ‘great enjoyment’ and attentiveness despite the conditions and number of people standing.⁸⁷⁰ It is notable that class was immediately recognised as an important distinction between the lunchtime and afternoon audiences, a feature which recurred in following reviews. The critic also highlighted the repertoire as suitable for easy yet attentive listening, perhaps an acknowledgement of the widely appealing yet serious nature of Hess’s endeavour. Finally, it is evident that from the outset the symbolic significance of bringing music to galleries empty of paintings was an important component of the recital’s aesthetic value.⁸⁷¹

Also published on the day after the concert, the review from *The Manchester Guardian* provides a contrasting perspective by emphasising the symbolic and exceptional qualities of the recital.

The plan of Miss Myra Hess, the pianist, to organise lunch and tea-time concerts in the evacuated National Gallery deserved huge success, and the first of these concerts to-day got all it deserved. [...] the audience to-day overflowed into neighbouring halls, and some people even improvised seats on the empty picture frames.

⁸⁶⁹ ‘National Gallery Concerts’, *The Times*, 11/10/39, 6.

⁸⁷⁰ *The Times*, 11/10/39, 12.

⁸⁷¹ The Gallery’s collections had been evacuated into ‘a disused slate quarry’ in North Wales at the outbreak of war. Zeigler, *London at War*, 50.

There were soldiers, sailors, men of the A.F.S., and women of the A.T.S. among the audience. They cheered Miss Hess when she appeared, and as they listened to her (surely no woman plays Beethoven's "Appassionata" so well) many did not hide their emotion in the concert-goer's usual tight-lipped way. This indeed, was no ordinary concert but a generous civilised gesture in the face of music's great obstacles. War has all but robbed Londoners of music. It seemed a proper and a dramatic thing that this "musical gesture" should have been made in this temple of another art from which art has fled.⁸⁷²

This review emphasises the gratitude of the public, a sentiment echoed in Bradley's bulletin,⁸⁷³ which was an important feature of the accepted value of this new concert venture. As with *The Times* review, the attribution of gratitude, emotion and affection lies solely with the audience, and the writer's position is abstract enough that it is unclear whether they were even in attendance. This ambiguity is all the more striking for the collective, emotional response ascribed to the audience. An important point is that the review from *The Manchester Guardian* twice explicitly acknowledges the exceptional nature of the recital. Firstly, by pointing to the break from conventional 'tight-lipped' concert-going behaviour within the audience, and secondly by positioning the recital as 'no ordinary concert' but a noteworthy symbolic, ideological gesture defiant of the effect of the Second World War on musical activity. Terms such as 'civilised' and 'generous' position the recital more widely within the wartime context by referencing the opposite, war and barbarism. As such, the language used instilled the event with great dramatic significance beyond the everyday resumption of musical life.

The following two articles present a considerably different perspective as their authors identified with the collective experience through use of the first person, an unconventional technique in music reviews (see below for comparison). The engagement and response described were visibly experienced by these reviewers, and thus create a more participatory, and perhaps therefore more ideologically compelling, narrative for the reader. As such, they are also more transparently a testimony of listening experiences. This break from journalistic technique may have been a result of the exceptionality of the event. However, the first article was not written by a music critic but by Kenneth Clark, Director of the National Gallery, who therefore had a different relationship with the recital and different, invested identities as listener, patron and reviewer. His article is thus a conscious entanglement of different personae that mediated the representation of his experience. Clark wrote

⁸⁷² 'A Concert in the National Gallery', *The Manchester Guardian*, 11/10/39, 4.

⁸⁷³ Bradley wrote 'Myra Hess is a musician [...] whose playing rouses in me affection as well as admiration, intensified now by one's gratitude for this latest enterprise of hers'. 10/10/39, LJHB 02/039.

Our doors were to open at 12.30; you can imagine our feelings when we looked out at about twenty-past twelve and saw a long queue, stretching down Trafalgar Square, of people waiting to get in. [...]

Ten minutes before it began every seat was taken, and there were people sitting on the floor and standing all round the walls. To our infinite regret we had to turn away several hundred. What sort of people were these who felt more hungry for music than for their lunches? All sorts. Young and old, smart and shabby, Tommies in uniform with their tin hats strapped on, old ladies with ear trumpets, musical students, civil servants, office boys, busy public men, all sorts had come, because they were longing for something to take them out of the muddle and uncertainty of the present into a world where even the most tragic emotions have dignity and order.

The first concert was given by Miss Hess herself, and the moment when she played the opening bars of Beethoven's 'Appassionata' will always remain for me one of the great experiences of my life; it was an assurance that all our sufferings are not in vain. I think the whole audience felt this, for I have never known people listen so earnestly, nor applaud with such a rush of pent up emotion and gratitude.⁸⁷⁴

It is evident that his review was mediated on several levels. Firstly, by his professional role and interest, in which sense this article acted as publicity for his concert series; and secondly by the element of professionalism that these reviews share, in that it was a narrative constructed for publication. His experience was evocatively, and intimately described, likely to persuade the public of the value of the series, and as such his transparency should be approached with caution. Nevertheless, the article is powerful testimony of the transformative effect of war upon the experience of listening to music. The tone of his description also points to interesting comparisons with the different culturally appropriate language, tone and expression of Bradley and Lewis's descriptions of their experiences (see Chapters 3 and 4).

A notable distinction can be made between the two different ways Clark discusses the audience. He cautiously describes their responses to the Appassionata in direct relationship with his own, providing visible evidence for his claim of the powerful nature of the experience: applause and 'earnest' listening behaviour. However, in making his point about the broad, crossing-cutting scope of the audience he also ascribed to them a war-related ideological motivation for attending, for dignified escapism, for which his description gives no evidence. An interesting part of this image, which is perpetuated by other contemporary sources of the period,⁸⁷⁵ is the idea that the

⁸⁷⁴ 'Concerts in the National Gallery', *The Listener*, Sir Kenneth Clark, 02/11/39, 884.

⁸⁷⁵ Vaughan Williams, for example, in discussion with CEMA's council, described rural areas as being 'starved of music'. Weingärtner, *The Arts as a Weapon of War*, 113. Similarly, Lord De La Warr, President of

public were 'hungry' for music (that provided them with sustenance in place of their lunches). This idea has a remarkable correlation with Bradley's notion of musical experience as 'sustaining' in place of sandwiches (see Chapter 3, section 2.2). As introduced in Chapter 1, the classlessness of the desire for 'good' music was a significant element of the people's war and cultural uplift mythologies, and popular memorialisation, and was based in testimony such as that given by Clark. Yet whether or not these individual listeners did long for escapism from uncertainty, in the manner Clark describes, cannot be assumed.

A review preserved with Bradley's bulletins demonstrated a critical approach that merged many of the stylistic and thematic elements already witnessed.

I went on Tuesday to the first of the National Gallery war-time concerts. An amazing experience. All sorts of people, young and old, smart and shabby, in uniform and out of it, soldiers, nurses, Salvation Army girls, typists, office-boys, old ladies with ear trumpets, and a few of the regular "musicals" with coiled plaits. All packed together [...] A few, perhaps, were there out of curiosity, but most of them because they were suffering from a raging thirst for music, for tranquillity re-collected through emotion, and for some assurance of pattern and order in a jangled world. She played magnificently and thoughtfully, almost as she were discovering – no, *uncovering* – the music for the first time. Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms – ironical, isn't it, how the world has to turn to the great Germans to find healing for the spiritual wounds inflicted on it by the ignoble ones? There were so many people in tears that it might have been a revivalist meeting. So it was, in a way. And the curious thing was that everything she played seemed to have a kind of double loveliness, as though she had managed to distil into it all the beauty of the pictures that were missing from the walls. It was quite unforgettable.⁸⁷⁶

This review is filled with persuasive, evocative language that demonstrates a different journalistic style, or perhaps purpose, in bringing together the many themes. The initial first person identification is balanced by a familiar description of the audience's visibly emotional response; the missing pictures are evoked as a source of aesthetic meaning; deep musical engagement was placed in opposition to the disordered wartime world; and similarly to Clark, the audience is ascribed a 'raging thirst for music' alongside a spiritual response. The music, performance and experience are positioned as a tripartite force in opposition to the war. However, it is notable that this review is the only one to mention overtly the paradox of the importance of Germanic

the Board of Education 'pointed to the National Gallery concerts as revealing "an almost pathetic hunger" for serious music. Leventhal, "The Best for the Most", 292.

⁸⁷⁶ Unidentified review, date, title and author unknown, preserved in with the Bradley bulletins for 10/10/39, LJHB 02/039.

repertoire in wartime, in contrast to the silent acceptance of the preceding reviews. This supports Morris's assertion that the survival of any kind of music, as opposed to the ideological significance of programming, was the main preoccupation of early wartime concerts.⁸⁷⁷ This review engages with the ideological value of music on many levels, by referencing the enemy, the audience, music's power and spirituality, all of which were positioned to convey the significance of the event.

The fifth review formed part of a longer article in *The Manchester Guardian* by Neville Cardus discussed below that provided an overview of the week of music in London.⁸⁷⁸ Its brevity enabled an encapsulation of the distinctly war-related musical symbolism that has been increasingly witnessed across the preceding articles.

In the National Gallery Myra Hess has organised concerts for one o'clock during the week. They are attended in thousands, mostly by the young folk who come from offices and eat their sandwiches while the "Appassionata" Sonata announces once and for all that, in a world organised for destruction, only the things which really matter are safe forever.⁸⁷⁹

In a sense this passage is a condensation of the significance of serious music in wartime, as a representation of liberty and the purpose of the Second World War, as described in Chapter 1.⁸⁸⁰ As shown, increasing ideological value was attached to the event as more reviews were generated, likely a result of the National Gallery's unique historical context as the first of a new, promising and war-related concert series that re-united the London public with regular live serious music. As discussed in Chapter 1, linguistic patterns that suggest transformative escapism for the audience, in opposition to the wartime situation, are prevalent across the reviews, such as 'tranquillity', 'serenity' and 'assurance', in contrast with 'destruction', 'uncertainty' and 'obstacles'. As Chapter 3 has demonstrated, once the National Gallery series established itself as a regular feature of the London landscape, the recitals no longer had individual ideological significance. Instead, they formed a foundation of 'normality' across the Second World War, acknowledged by Bradley for example, as a central feature of his weekly musical life.⁸⁸¹

⁸⁷⁷ See Morris, 'Battle for Music', 39–40.

⁸⁷⁸ The summarising nature of Cardus's comments does not suggest a presence at any of the National Gallery recitals that week; however the remainder of the article (see below) does imply a listening experience.

⁸⁷⁹ 'Music in London', *The Manchester Guardian*, N.C., 16/10/39, 8.

⁸⁸⁰ See Morris, 'Battle for Music', 189–90.

⁸⁸¹ As Chapter 3 examines, Bradley's 'retrospections' of his years of concert-going provide repeated reference to the National Gallery's centrality in his concert-going. For example, in 1940 he described them as 'the greatest & most attractive of the war-time innovations', LJHB 02/051; in 1943 he noted that they made up 115 of the 158 concerts he had attended in the past 12 months. 'Retrospect of the Season 1942 – 43', LJHB 02/085.

There are some interesting linguistic similarities between Bradley's bulletin and the reviews. They suggest that as listeners, he and the critics interacted with and wrote about music through the mediation of similar cultural values and knowledge of the conventional 'language of response and evaluation'.⁸⁸² For example, both Bradley and the first review from *The Manchester Guardian* discuss Hess's gender with reference to her skilled performance of the 'Appassionata'. There are numerous similar idioms and underlying sentiments between the reviews and bulletins with respect to the themes described above, such as the value of the event, the quality of the performance, and moved and uplifted listeners. For example, as quoted in Chapter 3, Bradley wrote of the recital as 'a splendid idea', described the Scarlatti as played 'so delicately & beautifully', and described 'an atmosphere of peace & normality' that 'quite carried me away'.⁸⁸³

By acknowledging the exceptional nature of this recital, these reviews created a phenomenon wherein the contextual information received far greater emphasis than in conventionally shaped reviews (see Glock below for comparison). The attention to the audience provides an interesting insight into the wider context of the event. They offer an unusually descriptive picture, with a considerable focus on the divisions of age, class, occupation and gender that marked listeners out as distinctive, worthy additions to the audience. For example, 'the young folk' and 'old ladies with ear trumpets'; 'smart and shabby'; 'musical students, civil servants, office boys, busy public men', 'the leisured as well as the workers', and 'and a few of the regular "musicals" with coiled plaits'. An evidently important component were the listeners dressed for war service, indicating a sense of pride that serious music was important to those directly involved with the war effort: 'soldiers, sailors, men of the A.F.S., and women of the A.T.S.', 'Tommies in uniform with their tin hats strapped on', 'soldiers, nurses, Salvation Army girls'. The various descriptions carefully emphasise the individuality of the collective audience and experience. This served to demonstrate how wartime had conjoined disparate communities in a taste for serious music, with ideological significance for the 'people's war' mythology described in Chapter 1. They paint a remarkable picture of an audience of 'elevated classlessness', who, importantly, listened contentedly and attentively (valued qualities in serious music culture) despite the cramped, non-ideal environment.⁸⁸⁴ An important acknowledgement is that all of these reviews share only positive value judgments of the event, and lack an 'evaluative component'.⁸⁸⁵ Yet, as the following reviews demonstrate, the unity of opinion that marks these articles was not a feature common in wartime performance reviewing.

⁸⁸² Botstein, 'Listening through Reading', 139.

⁸⁸³ 10/10/39, LJHB 02/039.

⁸⁸⁴ Rose, *Which People's War?*, 286.

⁸⁸⁵ See above. Shrum, 'Critics and Publics', 350–2.

2.2. Moiseiwitsch, Beethoven and contrasting experiences

The second concert, a performance of Beethoven's Emperor Concerto by Moiseiwitsch with the LSO conducted by Sir Henry Wood, occurred four days later at the Queen's Hall. The important distinction is that, in contrast to the newness of the National Gallery concerts, this was a conventional example of a Saturday symphony concert. This concert had no ideological significance in itself, and as such it serves as an example of the continuity of regular music-making and criticism within the initial months of disruption. Both critics identified themselves in the reviews discussed here. This analysis therefore illustrates the distinction between two focuses: the regular concerns and practices of professional reviewing in William Glock's article about 'yesterday's concerts' for *The Observer*; and the contrasting tone and content of Neville Cardus's war-themed review of 'week-end and midday concerts' for *The Manchester Guardian*, which encompassed the National Gallery event above.⁸⁸⁶ There is a striking contrast between the critics' responses, engagement with the music, and analysis of the quality of the performance. Therefore, to some extent this comparison is a matter of the distinction between journalistic styles and purposes, and personal tastes and biases of two critics. It demonstrates that the relationship between the underlying listening experience and critical review had a different function and shape depending on whether the war was an ideological concern or not.

The performance was first discussed in *The Observer* by William Glock, as one of two concerts that Saturday. He wrote

Sir Henry Wood conducted the L.S.O. at Queen's Hall in a curious programme composed of Elgar's Symphonic Prelude, "Polonia", Dohnanyi's Suite in F Sharp minor, and the two not altogether unknown pieces by Beethoven, the "Emperor" and the C minor Symphony. The Dohnanyi should be played with the utmost virtuosity, or, perhaps, at some seaside festival where one's admiration can be won by the brave but hopeless efforts of the local woodwind.

Yesterday it sounded level-headed and just a little dull. Mr. Moiseiwitsch was soloist in the "Emperor". He seemed stimulated rather by the sound of the pianoforte than by the sweep and design of the music, yet much in his performance was positive and exciting; the moments which disappointed might have been different had some good friend simply hung a portrait of Beethoven above the pianoforte. [...] W.G.⁸⁸⁷

⁸⁸⁶ The two reviews are respectively subtitled as such.

⁸⁸⁷ 'Music in London', *The Observer*, William Glock, 15/10/39, 11.

Glock's review follows a very clear structure in which three of the critical components outlined by Shrum can be identified:⁸⁸⁸ descriptive discussion of the programme, evaluative consideration of the Dohnanyi Suite's qualities and performance, and entertaining references to local seaside woodwind players and Beethoven's portrait. The information and opinion entwined here demonstrate the important functions of the critical review as both news and aesthetic judgement. As with the first reviews from *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian* above, Glock's review is detached, although nevertheless founded in his personal experience and response. A striking difference is the assertion of negative evaluations, and the sense of a disappointing experience, absent from the National Gallery reviews. This implied a desire for excitement and stimulation that was perhaps a result of the recent wartime narrative. Moreover, his analysis of the Dohnanyi points to a preconceived opinion and judgement of the work's musical value that affected his expectations and response. Combined with the straight-forward commentary, levity, and lack of an ideological message, these features suggest that the review represents an authentic representation of his experience.

Glock's review was followed a day later by Cardus's article from *The Manchester Guardian*, that paints an ideological, richly evocative and atmospheric picture of the event in remarkably different terms.

Crowds are swarming to concerts in London, hungry for music. This week-end Queen's Hall has been packed from floor to ceiling for the London Symphony Orchestra with Moiseiwitsch and Sir Henry Wood [...]

To hear again at Saturday's concert the "Emperor" Concerto was like coming out of the grave. As Moiseiwitsch played the solo part with a ravishing touch the vast audience sat transfixed – it was all rather affecting. Faces momentarily lost the ache and strain of the world, lost also the need of the mask or façade. The grave beauty of the slow movement rocked and stilled thousands of hurts and anxieties. When Moiseiwitsch's fingers touched the sublime descending notes of the piano's entrance, I felt more than ever the truth of the Schopenhaurian theory of the nature of music. For in these days music is for those of us who know it not just an escape; on the contrary, it is the only reality, not only as an aesthetic experience but as a philosophical fact. [...] Music is the only art which can express beauty without dependence on representation; it speaks to us direct, free of images borrowed from the material universe. To listen to music is to partake of the very spirit of Beethoven, to taste of his body, his substance. [...] I have heard profounder performances of the "Emperor" Concerto than this one at the Queen's Hall under Sir

⁸⁸⁸ See above. Shrum, 'Critics and Publics', 350–2.

Henry Wood's busy beat; but I have seldom known a more moved and uplifted audience. In the same programme music also proved that it is the most enchanting of all arts to the senses, as well as the most cleansing and revelatory to the mind and vision. Dohnanyi's Suite in F minor is one of the most joyous and stylish of orchestral pieces, and it brought out, by the way, the dexterity of the London Symphony Orchestra's wood-wind.⁸⁸⁹

The differences between Glock and Cardus's experiences are striking. In this review, the performance of the Dohnanyi suite became 'joyous' instead of 'dull'; the Emperor Concerto 'sublime' and 'affecting' instead of partially 'disappointing', and Moiseiwitsch granted a transfixing power. In contrast to Glock, the evaluative elements of Cardus's discussion of the performance are few and solely positive, likely because this review was dedicated to, and mediated by, an ideological, war-inspired message. An important consideration is that this review served to cover a wider base of events, and was evidently inspired throughout by the ideological rapture that pervaded the National Gallery recital reviews. Thus, in contrast with Glock's critical focuses, Cardus drew on the themes that predominated above, to describe a deeply engaged experience. He turned to evocative images of 'hungry', 'moved and uplifted' audiences; direct reflection on the wartime situation; and a lengthy philosophical exposition on the transcendent 'reality' of musical experience. Moreover, as discussed above, a similar terminology was used to position the value and power of musical experience in opposition to the spiritual suffering of wartime, in this case a revealing opposition between truthfulness and façade.

The contrasts between these reviews suggest that a remarkably different listening experience was shared by the two critics. This raises questions about the authenticity and truthfulness of these two reviews as representations of listening experiences. By moving beyond their differences, specifically the referential linguistic style of Cardus's review, they could be compared, with respect to the historical context, as listening experiences rather than pieces of professional writing. By moving beyond the review framework, it is evident that the two listeners' personal preconceptions, needs and mind-sets, were dominant influences on their responses. The distinctions between them therefore become a matter of mediation through their purpose, message and ideology. They demonstrate the differences that fractured the idealised collectiveness of the experience of serious music in this short period.

3. Negotiating the musical landscape of wartime

This section provides an alternative perspective by considering the differences between critical reviewing of popular and serious music during the Second World War. It examines the culturally determined linguistic differences between different styles of reviewing. It argues that unusual,

⁸⁸⁹ 'Music in London', *The Manchester Guardian*, N.C., 16/10/39, 8.

and specifically war-related events altered the dynamic within the reviews and encouraged implicit ideological valuation in discussions of audiences. It also discusses the position of light music within the hierarchies of wartime musical provision, through comparison of two culturally different critics.

3.1. Popular music in the opening months of war

A different perspective from the two sets of reviews in the preceding section is presented by a *Melody Maker* review by jazz connoisseur and critic Jerry Dawson, of a variety concert by well-known bandleader Ambrose in the early weeks of the resurgence of live music.

Opening at the Palace Theatre, Manchester, on Monday last, it was evident from interest in town, and, more importantly still, from advance bookings, that black-out or no black-out, the public still wanted to see their Ambrose (*writes Jerry Dawson*).

Nor did he disappoint them, inasmuch as he gave them fifty minutes of first-rate entertainment in the class which made him a number one attraction in pre-war days. [...]

By far the best number was a modern arrangement of *Vilja*, with some truly delightful work by muted brass, three clarinets and flute, and from the two trombones.

Screamingly funny was a parody on *Three Little Fishes* by Les ("Hitler") Carew, Max ("Goering") Bacon, and diminutive Syd ("Stalin") Colin. Les Carew's make-up in this particular number was well-nigh perfect.

Vera Lynn introduced a couple of numbers entirely new to me in *We'll Meet Again* and – with Jack Cooper – *You Can't Black Out The Moon*. I would like to prophesy a future for both these tunes. Evelyn Dall was well and truly on form in *Shabby Old Cabby* and a rumba arrangement of *Begin the Beguine*, and Prof Maxie Bacon, funny as ever in *Ten-a-Penny Pills*.

[...] The show must definitely be classed as excellent, and one which will certainly keep the Ambrose flag aloft, at a time when it is perhaps more essential than ever, that what has for years been the best that the country has to offer should – under most trying circumstances – be pursuing a double object – that of cheering people up, and keeping alive a profession which is suffering probably as much hardship as any.⁸⁹⁰

In contrast with the dominantly ideological discussion of war in the reviews above, this review situates its discussion of the new wartime context within references to tangible effects upon leisure patterns and repertoire, such as the black-out, topical parody, and war-themed songs.

⁸⁹⁰ 'All About The Ambrose Show', *Melody Maker*, Oct 1939, 13.

However, this wartime-context did not detract from the critical function of judgement, and Dawson's review was primarily occupied with evaluating the performances and music, as with Glock's review above. Indeed, as a jazz connoisseur Dawson noted that, 'there was little to interest the student of Jazz unless it be the subtleties of modern scoring'. Mediated through the practices of popular culture, the same important components of experience and critical reviewing were present. Dawson provided evaluation of the music, performance and audience, information and entertainment, yet framed within a first-person critical position that only occurred in two of the more evocative, ideological narratives above.

There are also striking similarities between the concerns of critics of both serious and popular cultures. Despite the differences in the style and form of their journalism (discussed below), the underlying sentiments between reviews in *Melody Maker* and the highbrow press were very similar. For example, as above, Dawson used the recent narrative of wartime to grant significance to the quality and continuation of music-making, and hunger for musical experience that this concert signified. Similarly, the 'double object' of music-making was, as Morris argued, a practical and ideological concern of both serious and popular music cultures, as both cultures fought to claim wartime status as providers of morale (see Chapter 1). As such it also invites comparison with the ideological 'double loveliness' of the National Gallery recital's quality and environment.

As Dawson prophesied, Lynn's song 'We'll Meet Again' was incredibly commercially successful, and controversially became 'the song of the war' for many, part of the popular wartime taste for sentimentality discussed in Chapters 2 and 4.⁸⁹¹ As with the popularity of the National Gallery recitals, this demonstrates how central aural icons of World War Two were recognised in this initial important, transitional period. Dawson's reference to the continued quality of top entertainment reflects a similar concern in the critics' preoccupations above, and Morris' assertion of the significance of ensuring that music survived in the new wartime context. Ambrose had been a 'high-society favourite' during the interwar period, and by 1939 had one of the top dance-bands in Britain.⁸⁹² The continued standard of his entertainment thus had implications for the survival of music more widely. The quality of musical experiences was a prominent theme in wartime reviewing, as it enabled the ideological messages of morale, uplift and the centrality of musical survival to be referenced or expressed (see below). This provides a striking comparison with Bradley's concern for standards, discussed in Chapter 3.

⁸⁹¹ See Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 8; Guthrie, 'Vera Lynn on Screen'.

⁸⁹² Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 26–7.

3.2. The language of reviewing

A notable observation about the previous highbrow and *Melody Maker* reviews is the difference between the style and language of the criticism. Broersma defines style in professional reviews as 'the choice between functionally equivalents of language' that 'carry different social meanings'.⁸⁹³ He argues that linguistic routines determine what journalism is, how it is positioned in the cultural landscape, and how it functions for specific communities.⁸⁹⁴ The appropriate use of musical terminology was an important marker of a critic's knowledge, position and authority within his specific musical community. Criticism of serious music required appropriate knowledge of musical forms, genres, and terms that created a frame of reference for reviews and evaluation;⁸⁹⁵ popular music criticism was constructed within a 'functionally equivalent' framework that addressed similar ideals and forms, yet expressed them very differently.

From the interwar period, film, radio and the popular press had introduced the nation both to a standard written language and a myriad of syntax and idioms that were powerful cultural indicators.⁸⁹⁶ Within popular culture, the use of Americanised idioms permeated spoken and written language.⁸⁹⁷ *Melody Maker* had an informal, colloquial language and Americanised style and idioms that positioned it firmly within the popular cultural landscape, in opposition to the formal serious press. Popular music enthusiasts spoke and wrote about dance music and jazz in appropriate terminology, such as 'number', 'outfit', 'combination', and 'hot', as seen in Dawson's review. The linguistic and stylistic differences between *Melody Maker* and the highbrow press were striking. Another article reviewing a performance by Jack Harris's newly re-structured dance band in the opening weeks of the Second World War illustrates other colloquial terms and phrases alien to the reviews of the highbrow press:

Chips Chippendall [sax], who was introduced without any previous billing, proved an absolute show-stopper, and was obliged to do three numbers before the audience would let him go. It is a long time since I saw any vocal or instrumental artists in a stage band receive such rapturous a welcome.⁸⁹⁸

Writing about popular music was mediated through the language of its culture. Therefore, an important distinction between the different cultures' reviewing practices was the use of appropriate idioms and linguistic style. For example, whereas Glock's phrase 'stimulated rather by the sound of the pianoforte' was within keeping of the language of serious musical culture, so too

⁸⁹³ Broersma, "Form, Style and Journalistic Strategies", xiii.

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, xiii-xiv.

⁸⁹⁵ See discussion of music appreciation in Chapters 1 and 3. See also Dale, *Music Analysis in Britain*.

⁸⁹⁶ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 508.

⁸⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 511.

⁸⁹⁸ 'Jack Harris In Variety With New Men In His Band', *Melody Maker*, Oct 1939, 9.

were Dawson's phrases 'Screamingly funny', and 'absolute show-stopper' appropriate to reviewing variety shows. Moreover, as suggested in the preceding chapters, listeners participated in the different musical cultures by demonstrating their knowledge of appropriate terminology in their letters and diaries. The linguistic practices of the musical cultures, displayed in the press, provided a framework of reference that affected how listeners thought about, experienced and responded to music.⁸⁹⁹ However, these differences mask similar observations and sentiments. For example, Dawson's phrase 'receive such rapturous a welcome' echoes the similar preoccupations of the critics who described the responses of the National Gallery audiences.

The use of colloquial phrases or terms in the highbrow press indicated, as with the use of first person in the examples above, a break from journalistic routine. Therefore, it was often used to frame reviews and convey particular points about events that were, musically or socially, unusual. As shown in the preceding chapters, the conditions of war invited music-making into increasingly informal situations, in which critics found themselves outside the purview of conventional musical experience and reviewing. Four examples illustrate how linguistic choices enabled critics to convey social meaning about audiences, repertoire and cultural values at certain events.

The first example demonstrates how language was used to position an audience against traditional cultural boundaries and ideologies. In October 1943, *The Manchester Guardian* reviewed an ENSA concert performed by the Hallé Orchestra, the first in a series of symphony concerts in 'industrial centres'.⁹⁰⁰ In 1943, ENSA began offering 'a repertoire of good music' (although 'not necessarily of a high-brow nature') to the troops and war-workers through its Symphony Concerts for War-Workers Scheme.⁹⁰¹ As a performance for ENSA by a top orchestra, this concert would have been a significant, charitable cultural gesture, with implicit ideological value. The review concluded: "'A reet good do" for 6d. and 1s. – the price of admission – was the general comment at the close of the concert.' This comment enabled the critic to expose the different social class and language of the audience, primarily formed of 'factory girls', as untypical of an orchestral concert. The quotation suggests an attempt to highlight the distance between the cultural spheres of the audience, and the critic and performers. Noting the cheap price of entry also established the unconventional, educational nature of the event. Moreover, the review also emphasised the behaviour and appreciation of this 'splendid' audience, and described how 'there could have been no more attentive audience', who responded to Beethoven's Seventh Symphony with a 'tumultuous ovation' for the orchestra. These factors transformed the critics' observations into a framework for referencing and evidencing the wartime myth of cultural uplift and new

⁸⁹⁹ For example, Lewis. See Chapter 4.

⁹⁰⁰ 'Halle's E.N.S.A. Concert at Wigan', *The Manchester Guardian*, 12/10/43, 6.

⁹⁰¹ Hayes, 'More Than "Music-While-You-Eat"?', 216–7. See also Leventhal, "'The Best for the Most'".

audiences for serious music (see Chapter 1), consciously, if implicitly, participating in the myth-making.

A second review that sought to emphasise the audience and its reactions was also written about an educational event, a 'Young People's Concert' in Manchester, by the Hallé Orchestra conducted by Barbirolli. Although the majority of the review was concerned with an evocative evaluation of the qualities of the performance, the first paragraph was focused on the behaviour and response of the audience.⁹⁰²

Promoted by the Manchester Education Committee, this concert drew a vast assembly of the youthful to the King's Hall, Belle Vue, last night. The youthful took some time to assemble, to find their seats, and to settle down, with the result that the concert began ten minutes late; there were moments, too, when their listening silence was approximate rather than real. But that they keenly enjoyed the music played by the Hallé Orchestra under Mr. John Barbirolli's conductorship – of that there could be no doubt whatsoever.

The description of the audience's behaviour and response creates a framework within which their unfamiliarity with concert-going convention and etiquette was positioned, and used to qualify, their attentiveness and 'keen enjoyment'. By emphasising the quality of the performance, the critic conveyed a sense of the privilege of such an experience for the 'youthful' audience. Moreover the critic's description is repeatedly qualified with terms such as 'greatest music', 'grandeurs and beauties', and 'exquisite' which convey a message about the educational and enlightening value and quality of great serious music.

The third and fourth examples demonstrate how critics framed their tastes, with remarkable similarity to the listeners discussed in Chapter 2, through sharp oppositions between cultures when confronted with unusually populist repertoire. Two reviews from *The Times* and *Melody Maker* demonstrate how notions of taste and musical quality collided within the boundaries of middlebrow populist programming that crossed boundaries between popular and serious musical cultures. They are interesting because they provide a high quantity of evaluation as compared to the articles above.

An interesting review in *The Times* covered a concert in 1941 at the RAH conducted by dance-band leader, Geraldo. Geraldo came to prominence during the Second World War when he gained a long-term contract with the BBC from 1941 to 1944. His usual performing forces 'ranged from a small swing-oriented band-within-a-band to a "concert orchestra," which included a full complement of strings', of the style reviewed here.⁹⁰³ *The Times* critic wrote

⁹⁰² 'Halle Concert for Young People', *The Manchester Guardian*, W.W.R., 27/03/45, 3.

⁹⁰³ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 7.

The name Geraldo occurs frequently in the columns of the *Radio Times*; the man who bears it appeared at the Albert Hall on Saturday afternoon at the head of an orchestra of 65 players. The entertainment was mysteriously described as “Music in Modern Form.” This was not a synonym for modern music – far from it – but appeared to describe the constitution of the band, which consisted of a symphony orchestra plus elements of a jazz *ensemble* – namely, a family of saxophones, a guitar, and an extra trombone. This looked like making the worst of two styles and did, at any rate in some jazz. For the essential cut and thrust of the raw instrumentation of jazz is smothered if overlaid with string tone. Thus a “jazz classic,” the “St Louis Blues,” so reorchestrated, had lost its native kick. But a classic in the other sense, Moussorgsky’s “Night on the Bare Mountain,” was played quite competently and according to score. Mr. Dennis Noble sang some good old songs and some bad new ones. Altogether this “modern form” of music was a queer jumble.’⁹⁰⁴

This example relates closely to Cook’s concept of a professional listener.⁹⁰⁵ *The Times* critic’s disdain of the visible and aural elements of jazz culture suggests a close-minded lack of aesthetic appreciation or understanding, and an adherence to the implicit hierarchies of musical culture. This review suggests that the critic was uncomfortable with the experience. The cultural difference was repeatedly emphasised, both linguistically and stylistically. This can be seen, for example, in the acknowledgement that ‘modern’ music was jazz as opposed to the serious musical culture’s ‘modernist’ definition, and the use of italics; the combination of jazz and orchestral elements (‘making the worst of two styles’, and ‘a queer jumble’); and the evaluation of the quality of arrangements and ensemble. The Mussorgsky was linguistically privileged, and the critic appeared surprised that it was ‘competently’ played.⁹⁰⁶ As with the ENSA concert example above, the use of quotation marks for ‘jazz classic’ enabled the critic to distance himself from popular culture, and positioned the concert not as a successful blend of jazz and popular classics, but an uncomfortable one. This evaluative focus was also served by avoiding mention of whether the concert was popular or well-attended.

A contrasting professional perspective is evident in a review by *Melody Maker*’s radio critic ‘Detector’, who reviewed a broadcast performance by Jan Berenska and his Orchestra. Berenska

⁹⁰⁴ ‘Symphony Orchestra With Jazz: Geraldo’s Concert’, *The Times*, 09/12/41, 6.

⁹⁰⁵ Cook, *Music, Imagination, and Culture*, 177.

⁹⁰⁶ Baade notes that performances of popular classics, usually swung with a ‘playful aesthetic’, became a popular subgenre of dance music during the Second World War. Whilst some celebrated this as a sign of cultural uplift, they frequently invoked scathing criticism as ‘contaminating’ and ‘disreputable’ to the value of good music. Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, 45–6.

was a skilled classical musician, who conducted a small fifteen-piece light orchestra that broadcast regularly from Leamington Spa.⁹⁰⁷ 'Detector' wrote

JAN BERENSKA AND HIS ORCHESTRA in "Midland Music Makers" last Thursday week (May 8) gave the perfect example of the absurdity of asking a straight orchestra to play jazz.

Called upon to take a solo in a number called *J. B. Stomp*, the trumpet player can only be said to have put the finishing touch of corn to what was never more than a rather lamentable performance.

It was none the less a pity because, when playing the kind of music for which it is designed, this outfit can be really good.

Aided by the delightful singing of Marjorie Westbury in, for instance, *How Happy I Could Be*, it was most attractive.⁹⁰⁸

There are notable similarities between the evaluations of these two reviews. 'Detector' was similarly disappointed by the 'absurdity' of the cultural cross-over and performances, and privileged the qualities of jazz over light 'corn'. Both critics chose language that distanced their favoured cultural heritage from the middlebrow light music these two programmes featured, although 'Detector' did so less judgementally by acknowledging the legitimate skill of the orchestra when confined to its cultural sphere. Moreover, this review does not display the narrow-minded 'professional' listening that Cook described. As *The Times* critic struggled to describe Geraldo's orchestra within the accepted boundaries of his culture, 'Detector's review is framed with reference to the specialist terminology of popular culture, 'outfit', 'number', 'straight', that equally positioned the middlebrow as neither popular nor classical.

4. Reviews and Bradley

The last section of this chapter returns to Lionel Bradley to consider the extent to which he was influenced by professional reviews. Firstly, the reviews will be considered as resources for Bradley to acquire information and news, perhaps otherwise inaccessible to him. Secondly, they will be assessed as a potential stylistic and linguistic influence for the bulletins, as alluded to above. And thirdly, this section will question whether critics' opinions had any influence over Bradley's responses to, and own opinions about, his experiences.

⁹⁰⁷ Berenska is now little remembered; however from 1933 he regularly broadcast light music on the BBC's pre-war regional programmes, and later on *MWYW*. A *Radio Times* programme announcement from November 1938 shows that his orchestra broadcast the typical variety of light music, including popular classics such as Strauss waltzes and Schubert 'selections'. 'Regional Programme Midland', 19/11/38, *The Radio Times*, 86.

⁹⁰⁸ 'Jan Berenska And His Orchestra', *Melody Maker*, 'Detector', 17/05/41, 9.

Shrum discusses the role and influence of critics as ‘cultural mediators’. He argues that an important part of the critic’s role was to interpret and review cultural objects (music) and events, and the way they did so created new cultural objects (the reviews) that the intended audience also interpreted against their own experiences, knowledge and expectations.⁹⁰⁹ He argues that ‘if reviews are cultural mediators, their content should affect the experience of an object’, either beforehand or afterwards.⁹¹⁰ In this way, reviews have the potential to influence the public’s expectations of future performances and opinions about musical repertoire and performers, and shape the ways they think about past experiences. Bradley’s relationship with reviews was shaped by the fact that he had attended the same events, and formed his own opinions of his experiences.⁹¹¹ Chapter 3 has argued that as a listener Bradley was deeply encultured in the ways he listened to, responded to and valued music, and in his expectations for his listening experiences. The following analyses argue that his responses to concert reviews were shaped by the certainty of his own knowledge and opinions, which fluctuated according to the type of repertoire performed.

As noted in Chapter 3, Bradley was an avid reader of concert reviews. Preserved within his bulletin booklets for the period 1936 to 1946 are 197 newspaper clippings about various events. Their preservation is interesting in itself, for each review must have left an impression on Bradley to have been included, although he did not often identify why. Table 5.1 provides a chronological overview of the distribution of the preserved reviews, and the small number about which he provided commentary.⁹¹²

Table 5.1 shows that Bradley’s interest in preserving reviews increased significantly during the 1941–1942 season, which suggests a prominent correlation with the increase in his taste for chamber music and unfamiliar foreign repertoire (see Chapter 3). This correlation is supported by a consideration of the types of concerts from which he preserved reviews (see below). The surviving clippings are concentrated amongst a small number of publications. *The Times* predominates, followed by *The Manchester Guardian* and the *New Statesman* and, infrequently, *The Observer* and the *Daily Telegraph*. The majority of the reviews and publications were not

⁹⁰⁹ Shrum, ‘Critics and Publics’, 351.

⁹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 352.

⁹¹¹ With one exception noted by Bradley, when he included a review of Verdi’s *Rigoletto* performed by Sadler’s Wells Opera Company that he had not attended, because he had seen the same cast in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*. Note after bulletin for 19/01/45, LJHB 02/102; ‘Princes Theatre: Sadler’s Wells Company in “Rigoletto”’, *The Times*, 19/01/45.

⁹¹² For Bradley’s division of events in ‘seasons’, see Chapter 3.

identified by Bradley, which suggest that he was intimately familiar with their editorial styles and could recognise their sources.⁹¹³

Table 5.1: Distribution of newspaper clippings in the Bradley bulletins

Annual 'Season'	Number of clippings	Number with commentary
1936–1937	1	
1937–1938	9	
1938–1939	4	2
1939–1940	8	2
1940–1941	4	2
1941–1942	21	
1942–1943	37	2
1943–1944	21	2
1944–1945	48	5
1945–1946	44	3
Total:	197	18

The collected reviews can be divided into two broad categories according to Bradley's level of interaction with them. The first category contains those simply clipped and inserted on some of which he had recorded the publication and date. These reviews form the overwhelming majority, as Table 5.1 demonstrates. The second category contains those for which Bradley provided commentary that revealed his interests, either within a bulletin booklet as an addendum or postscript to a bulletin, or as marginalia and highlighted sections on the clipping. These remarks, which appear on only eighteen reviews, were spread fairly evenly after his first two years in London, although with a peak in the 1944–5 season, as Table 5.1 shows.

Although Bradley did not voice his opinions of the first category of reviews, several comments can be made about them which suggest that these reviews were an important source of information for him, and were preserved either for the benefit of his future self or perhaps for his recipients.⁹¹⁴ Their distribution over the decade suggests that they became an increasingly important resource during the Second World War. This likely reflects two ways the war influenced Bradley's listening (see Chapter 3): his access to contemporary and little-known repertoire, and the lack of printed information available about the repertoire he heard. A large number of the

⁹¹³ Most of the articles are identifiable by their titles. Combined with the date of the relevant bulletin, this enabled most of them to be discovered and attributed within the various publications' archives.

⁹¹⁴ The assumption has been made that Bradley, rather than his recipients, included and preserved these reviews, as there is no evidence that the recipients were participatory (see Chapter 3).

reviews are about programmes of such repertoire, on which there existed little reference literature (see Chapter 3). Therefore, it is likely that that concert reviews were an influential resource of information.

The selection of events for which clippings are preserved supports this argument. For example, notable first performances were included, such as Britten's Violin Concerto on April 1941, and *Peter Grimes* in June 1945,⁹¹⁵ and the Proms performance of Shostakovich's Leningrad Symphony in June 1942.⁹¹⁶ The unfamiliar repertoire that Bradley appreciated was well-represented by reviews about concerts including works by Prokofiev, Hindemith, Bliss, Bartok, Rubbra, Fauré, Poulenc, Milhaud, Goossens, Goehr, Moeran, Lutyens, Walton, Glazunov and Schoenberg. Reviews of unusual and nationalist events were also preserved, including concerts of English, Russian, French and American repertoire.

However, the clippings also demonstrate Bradley's wider tastes (see Chapter 3). Chamber concerts, such as the Boosey & Hawkes series, are equally represented alongside orchestral concerts, like the Proms. Contemporary music is balanced by reviews of canonical repertoire such as Mozart operas and concerts of Bach, Haydn and Handel. Bradley also preserved a number of reviews about well-known performers, ensembles and conductors, which implies he turned to reviews for their evaluations as well as information. For example, two reviews from March and April 1943 cover Yehudi Menuhin's visit;⁹¹⁷ and the conductors Boyd Neel, Barbirolli and Toscanini accompany a predominant number of reviews about Beecham.

The second category of reviews, those with commentary, demonstrate two different aspects of Bradley's relationship with reviews. Firstly, they further support the assertion that Bradley used the reviews as a source of information and knowledge. This was either additional knowledge, or was used to confirm his own evaluations. In this way, reviews were influential, in that they altered his perspective of his experience and assertions. As described above, concert reviews were usually published in the daily papers the following morning, or in the days following by the weekly press. This is an important consideration when analysing Bradley's bulletins more generally, because the position of his comments about reviews (in addendums and post-scripts) implies that he regularly wrote his bulletins immediately after the concerts he attended and before the reviews were published. This was most notably the case when additional information was available that filled a gap in his knowledge.

For example, on 30 January 1939, Bradley described his experience of a concert by the LSO, conducted by Weingartner. He detailed his enjoyment of 'Schubert's heavenly C major', noting

⁹¹⁵ 06/04/41, LHB 02/056; 07/06/45, LHB 02/106.

⁹¹⁶ 29/06/42, LHB 02/070.

⁹¹⁷ 16/03/43, LHB 02/080; 04/04/43, LHB 02/081.

that 'Apart from that slight lack of richness in the strings it was beautifully played & the wind were so good'.⁹¹⁸ He drew a line underneath the bulletin as was his custom (see Chapter 3), and then added a further section in which he pasted an excerpt of a review, identified as from *The Times*. The review detailed how Weingartner had re-orchestrated Schubert's symphony. Underneath this, he commented:

It is interesting to know how so satisfying a result was produced. I was aware that there was present an unusually full complement of wood-wind but as I was in the 3rd row of the balcony at the side I could not see very well what was going on.⁹¹⁹

This example illustrates how Bradley used a review to fill a gap in his aesthetic understanding of his experience, which he had perhaps only acknowledged after reading *The Times* review. This gap had resulted from a deficit in his experience, his inability to visually confirm his aural experience. The comment demonstrates his interest in understanding music and his experiences on a technical level.

Two other examples illustrate how Bradley used reviews to provide information in cases where his own knowledge was incomplete or his memory lacking. On 23 April 1940 Bradley heard a performance of two light operas, Gretry's *Zémire & Azor* and Dibdin's *The Ephesian Matron*, on which he wrote a lengthy bulletin, and clipped a review. Having drawn a line under the bulletin, Bradley added a post-script that commented on the clipped review, which demonstrated that he used the information he gleaned primarily to confirm his own critical ability and opinions.

P.S. I was glad to see the remark in the Times ~~that~~ of Z. & A that "over and over again it recalls Gluck, but is more facile and less powerful" I was hinting at this when I said "one does not expect from Gretry the tragic seriousness of Gluck" but I was too little acquainted with the opera of the period to say more. Apart from Mozart (and *Idomeneo* doesn't come till eleven years later in 1782) I have heard only two operas of Gluck: *Orfeo* (Vienna 1762, Paris 1774) and *Alceste* (Vienna 1767, Paris 1776), so that I could not decide for myself whether there really was a resemblance to Gluck's music or whether it was just that both Gluck and Gretry were writing in the contemporary idiom⁹²⁰

In this instance Bradley demonstrates that he had a considerable knowledge of a broad range of music including little-known repertoire. Moreover, he was interested in and able to make some connections between the repertoire he heard in a critical manner, suggesting that he aspired to create reports of a similar knowledgeable standard as professional reviews. As with the example

⁹¹⁸ 30/01/39, LJHB 02/034.

⁹¹⁹ 30/01/39, LJHB 02/034. Extract from 'Dr Weingartner's Programme', *The Times*, 31/01/39, 10.

⁹²⁰ 23/04/40, LJHB 02/046. 'Fortune Theatre', *The Times*, date unknown. Bradley's phrase 'I was hinting at this when I said' and following quotation refers to his own bulletin about the event.

regarding Weingartner above, this suggests that Bradley was a self-aware listener, and regarded reviews as a useful resource when he felt his own knowledge to be insufficient. Examples such as this demonstrate a more vulnerable side to Bradley as a listener than the majority of his commentaries do not (see Chapter 3). In both cases, it is unclear from the archival material whether Bradley wrote these addenda at the same time as, or after, his own bulletins. Therefore it is equally unclear whether he had read the reviews before writing the bulletins. However, both examples illustrate that he wished to keep his own responses separate from his thoughts about the reviews. This supports the argument that he used reviews as a secondary resource for further reflection.

The second example is a note from September 1942 that began an unusual bulletin, written days after the experience he was about to document.

NOTE Owing to an unfortunate conjunction of events the next three concerts were not written up until 9 or 10 days after they took place, when my memory of the detailed impressions made on me by some unfamiliar works had grown some-what dim. I therefore enclose a larger selection than usual of comments on these particularly interesting concerts made by critics who know much more than I do.⁹²¹

This comment is remarkable for two reasons. Firstly, he acknowledged that he saw critics as more knowledgeable than himself, which supports the assertion that he used them as an educational resource. This idea is explored further below. Secondly, his comment acknowledged his own process of documenting his experiences, and the immediacy he felt necessary to provide an appropriately critical review while his impressions were still fresh (discussed in Chapter 3). Only two of the clippings he inserted are still preserved within the booklet, so we cannot know what a 'larger selection than usual' meant to him. Notably on one review he made a correction to the name of the performer, Ilona Kabos (printed Flora Kados), perhaps with the aid of a programme.

This correction is an example of the second aspect of his relationship that the commentaries demonstrates. They show that Bradley was aware of the fallibility of reviews as resources, as he occasionally pointed out such errors in their information, and on a small number of occasions, disagreed with their critics' evaluations. This points towards a different, more critical relationship, and suggests that reviews did not determine his opinions and responses to his experiences. Instead, he judged them against his own opinions, without always privileging their knowledge or

⁹²¹ 23/09/42, LJHB 02/074. 'Boosey and Hawkes Concerts', *The Times*, 25/09/42; 'Two Concerts', *New Statesman*, Edward Sackville West, date unknown (corrected by Bradley). The 'next three concerts' he had attended were on the 23/09 and 24/09/42.

professionalism. Their small number within the preserved clippings they may have been anomalous rather than reflective of Bradley's attitude towards reviews.

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, Bradley was a predominantly confident, attentive listener and reporter, and indeed conformed to the definition proposed by Nicholls, Hall and Forgasz of a Victorian-era serious 'amateur listener' adept at articulating his ideas about music.⁹²² As argued above (regarding the National Gallery recital), Bradley demonstrated a stylistic and linguistic similarity to professional reviews that suggests he listened and wrote within similar cultural boundaries, and was to that extent an amateur critic. He certainly expected a high standard of critical reflection from himself, as the above examples show. So it is perhaps unsurprising that he trusted his own aural impressions when his opinions contrasted strongly with those of a professional critic. For example, on 26 May 1944, Bradley wrote a lengthy bulletin about a RPS concert of Russian music at the Albert Hall, performed by the Hallé Orchestra and conducted by Barbirolli, 'given to celebrate the second anniversary of the Anglo Soviet Treaty'.⁹²³ Bradley was grateful for the opportunity to hear Barbirolli,⁹²⁴ described a 'revivified Halle orchestra' and wrote of his experience:

I have avoided Tchaikovsky's Pathetic Symphony for so long that I was quite surprised to find how familiar most of it was. Barbirolli secured a most expressive & sensitive performance with no trace of the febrile or sentimental & the quiet & solemn ending was especially impressive.⁹²⁵

In contrast, *The Times* review preserved by Bradley argued the symphony 'proved a fatal vehicle for the exercise of the orchestra's responsiveness in a bad cause', and accused Barbirolli of 'sacrificing the basic rhythm of its movements to the making of rhetorical points'.⁹²⁶ The critic argued that as a result, 'the performance became hysterical [...] and the music's fundamental sincerity had evaporated in theatricalism'.⁹²⁷ Bradley underlined his bulletin twice at its end, and underneath added a commentary on *The Times* review. He wrote

The Times critic differs from me absolutely as to the quality of the orchestra & the lack of theatricality in the "Pathetic". I remain of my original opinion

The most striking point is that Bradley stood by his original responses to the experience. This suggests two things: firstly, that he wrote his bulletin before he read the review; and secondly,

⁹²² Nicholls, Hall, and Forgasz, 'Charting the Past', 9.

⁹²³ 26/05/44, LJHB 02/096.

⁹²⁴ Barbirolli had only returned to England to conduct the Hallé Orchestra in 1943, having conducted the New York Philharmonic Orchestra since 1937. Doctor and Wright, *The Proms: A New History*, 280.

⁹²⁵ See Chapter 3 for a discussion of Bradley's attitudes towards popular composers such as Tchaikovsky.

⁹²⁶ 'The Hallé Orchestra', *The Times*, 27/05/44, 6.

⁹²⁷ *Ibid.*

that he was not influenced by the opinions in the review, although his wording, 'I remain', implies that persuasion was a possibility. This is an important consideration that the other clippings do not convey. As with the contrast of Glock and Cardus above, the two different reports here suggest that Bradley and the critic had very different experiences, and moreover that they were influenced in distinct ways by their preconceptions of the symphony and expectations of the performers. There is also a prominent linguistic difference between them: *The Times* review mediated through dramatic statements and rhetorical language that contrasted with Bradley's simpler description.

A distinct set of commentary is provided in Bradley's marginalia: by short, pithy judgements of the quality of specific reviews, which suggest that the reviews provoked strong reactions in him. These comments demonstrate that Bradley sometimes thought little of the content of reviews, either because they were factually incorrect,⁹²⁸ or because he disagreed with their evaluations. For example, on 28 October 1944, he attended a Mozart chamber recital at the Wigmore Hall in aid of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund.⁹²⁹ Preserved with the bulletin from this concert is a conventionally anonymous review from *The Times*, at the top of which Bradley simply wrote: 'Who writes this nonsense'. The passages he highlighted in the margin show that his distaste was for the critic's judgements of Mozart. He underlined the phrase 'Mozart's filigree texture', and highlighted the sentence:

For the rest, it was just Mozart— sometimes light-hearted, sometimes capricious, sometimes pensive, sometimes even overcast, but always possessing complete confidence in his eighteenth-century sense of musical values.⁹³⁰

It is notable that the section to which Bradley took offence was a judgement of the repertoire, as opposed to the performance. A similar instance had occurred on 21 September 1944, when Bradley wrote 'What nonsense!' in the margin of another review from *The Times* titled 'Boyd Neel Orchestra: A Concert for Highbrows'.⁹³¹ It is likely that on this occasion as well Bradley took offence at the criticism of highbrow repertoire, specifically Stravinsky's *Apollon* suite, as dull, boring and insipid. In contrast, Bradley's own review was that 'Apollon Musagète is a very lovely work' that he found impressive, and he perhaps disliked the article's assertion that the suite's dullness was the 'price to pay for being a highbrow'. These examples demonstrate that Bradley was more confident in his own responses and assertions than he was in those expressed in

⁹²⁸ For example on 10/04/45, Bradley attended a performance of Mahler's *Das Lied van der Erde*, and commented in the margin of a review from *The Times*, 'It has been done twice at least since 1936', in response to the critic's suggestion it had been 'perhaps a dozen years' (Bradley's emphasis). LHJB 02/105. Marginalia on "'The Song of the Earth": Mahler's Great Symphony', *The Times*, 11/04/45.

⁹²⁹ 28/10/44, LHJB 02/100. Marginalia on 'Mozart Chamber Music', *The Times*, 02/11/44, 6.

⁹³⁰ 'Mozart Chamber Music', *The Times*, 02/11/44, 6.

⁹³¹ Associated with 21/09/44, LHJB 02/099. Marginalia on 'Boyd Neel Orchestra', *The Times*, 25/09/44, 8.

reviews, and particularly in the discussion of the merits of repertoire. Notably, this was not a practice limited to the later bulletins: on a review from of *The Times* of a concert on 13 November 1938, Bradley wrote 'No!' twice in the margins and underlined five phrases that criticised the performance and eighteenth-century repertoire as variously oppressive, insipid, lacking feeling, understated and dull.⁹³² Therefore, these comments were not a sign that Bradley had grown in confidence of his opinions during the Second World War.

Given the regularity with which Bradley clipped articles from *The Times*, it is striking that on the occasions when he disagreed strongly, reviews from this publication were at fault. Nevertheless, Bradley himself indicated that he considered it a superior critical resource. On 15 December 1945, he pasted on the page after his bulletin a review from *The Daily Telegraph* about a concert of modern music, and commented below

This nonsense appeared in The Daily Telegraph of Dec. 15. Compare the reasoned and intelligent criticism in The Times. If the Daily Telegraph can't do better than this they might just as well cease to report on concerts at all⁹³³

It is evident therefore, that Bradley's relationship with critical reviews was nuanced, and influenced by factors as varied as the publication, the quality of the criticism, and his own needs with respect to knowledge, information and accuracy. The relationship spanned a broad number of critical purposes, from information-gathering to criticism of critic's assessments, which suggests a fluidity to the amount of influence reviews had upon him.

The evidence here suggests that clipped reviews held two functions for him: firstly and predominantly, to offer information that filled a gap in, or confirmed, his knowledge; and secondly, to demonstrate occasions when he felt strongly that the reviews were incorrect. Therefore, professional reviews were certainly influential as a regular resource for Bradley, particularly on occasions when information was lacking. As explored above, there were considerable structural, stylistic and linguistic similarities between Bradley's bulletins and concert reviews, which suggests that Bradley constructed his bulletins within the same cultural framework as the critics, perhaps influenced by the regularity of their professionalism. The examples above show that he learnt technical information from reviews, and likely was inspired by their vocabulary. Therefore, these commonalities suggest that reviews may also have been influential as part of the cultural environment in which he listened to, thought about, and wrote about music. Moreover, they gave him the opportunity to test his convictions and identity as a knowledgeable listener. The interesting distinction within his commentaries demonstrates two

⁹³² LJHB 02/031. Marginalia on 'Cambridge Theatre', *The Times*, 15/11/38.

⁹³³ Additional notes to 14/12/45, LJHB 02/113. 'Modern Musical Assortments', *Daily Telegraph*, F.B., 15/12/45; 'Edward Clark Concerts', *The Times*, 18/12/45.

very contrasting perspectives, which equally support and refute the notion that professional reviews influenced, or mediated, Bradley's interpretation of his experiences and musical opinions. A notable difference is whether or not he agreed with the sentiment and evaluation of the critics. This suggests that reviews were more influential when they accorded with, and thus had the potential to enhance, his initial opinions. In contrast, reviews that gave opposing evaluation received negative reactions, exposed the strength of Bradley's convictions, and showed that he trusted his own responses as legitimate and valuable.

Summary

This chapter argues that some wartime musical events were consciously instilled with ideological values by the critics who reviewed them. The reviews of Hess and Moiseiwitsch's performances show the ideological force with which the resurgence of live serious music in London was enveloped. The prominent unity of images and concerns in these reviews, and the preoccupation with audiences and the collectiveness of their experience, suggests that the new wartime environment altered the demands and framework of their professionalism. Similarly, throughout the Second World War, highlighting the significant features of musical events (whether performers, repertoire, location or audience) enabled critics to move outside the constraints of conventional music journalism and address the social relevance of wartime music-making. However, with striking parallel to Chapter 3, regular music-making beyond the initial months of war was not directly related to the wartime context. This chapter also argues that the linguistic differences between reviews of serious and popular music enabled them to convey appropriate cultural values, tastes and judgements. However, the differences often masked similar underlying sentiments and critical concerns. Finally, this chapter suggests that professional reviews were a valuable resource for Bradley. Bradley's clippings and commentary demonstrated the nuanced ways in which reviews influenced him: by providing information, offering stylistic and linguistic models, mediating the evaluations he made, and enhancing his reflections on his experiences. Moreover, the relationship between Bradley and the reviews was highly personal and intertwined with his musical knowledge, interpretation and certainty in his response.

Conclusion

There have been three main focuses to this thesis, as presented in the Introduction. They were firstly, to examine the influence of the Second World War upon the experience of listening to music; secondly, to establish the nature and form of listening experiences of this period and how it was shaped by external factors and cultural norms; and thirdly, to explore how listeners related to a variety of notions that have provided recurring themes throughout the thesis. These themes were the listeners' sense of identity within the broader listening public; musical tastes; judgement of musical value; use of language; participation in encultured norms and behaviours; and interaction with the political and ideological statuses of wartime music. As demonstrated, these focuses are closely intertwined.

The individuals studied here show that it is impossible to generalise about the experience of listening to music. Their experiences encompass an extensive variety of environments, attitudes, and media of listening: both public and private, formal and informal, where the music was physically present and disembodied, and as part of music-centric and multi-faceted environments. Even those who listened to the same genres could and did respond very differently according to their personal tastes and expectations. There are, however, a number of conclusions that can be drawn from experiences as disparate as attending a chamber music recital and hearing soldiers singing popular wartime songs in the street. They are presented in the following three sections.

1. The influence of war

The first main focus of the thesis was to assess the influence of the Second World War. Historical scholarship has centred on the shifts in perspective, controversies and tension that affected the survival, policy and programming of music during World War Two. These areas include the ideological function and value accorded to music in wartime, the importance of nationalism in contrast with the popularity of foreign music (both German and American), and attitudes towards new and changing demographics of listeners. Such focuses have proven useful points of enquiry into listening experiences, and this thesis demonstrates that the specifically war-influenced programming and attitudes of musical organisations had notable effects on the experiences of some listeners. For example, political concert programming honouring Allied culture offered Bradley access to lesser-known European repertoire, expanding the boundaries of his concert-going. In contrast, others felt strongly nationalist about music and desired patriotic programming. Mrs Pennock's letters to the BBC demonstrate a powerful, emotional undercurrent of dissent that stood against the widespread acceptance of European musical culture as an international heritage. Both of these examples are important illustrations of the effects of war on music

provision and listening. Yet they are also hidden narratives within our current historical understanding, and thus an example of what this thesis offers to scholarship of the Second World War.

Nevertheless, as demonstrated, the focuses of the historical literature reveal only a small part of the story about listening. Beyond the broader shifts and contentions, there were a number of different ways in which the Second World War directly infiltrated everyday musical life and experience. As many of the experiences illustrate, the most obvious influence of war was the disruption and privation it caused. This disruption occurred in a number of ways, such as the difficulty of travel due to the blackout and bombing damage; the potential danger of gathering in a public place; the conscription or mobilisation of musicians affecting the survival of ensembles; and the resulting lowered standards of performances. They were a part of wartime existence, a part of every decision to listen to music, and particularly to attend a musical event. The wartime trajectories of many musical organisations reveal that this was a period of great upheaval in the musical landscape, and one that deeply affected the provision of music across Britain. This, in turn, had a deep and important effect on the access and quality of experience of music for the different listeners featured in this thesis, particularly Bradley and the BBC listeners. However, the amount of influence the Second World War had upon music-making and musical experience was not continuous across its duration, or equal in scope and effect. For example, war also had a less disruptive, but still pervasive, presence through changes to the environments of listening, such as the presence of uniforms amongst musicians and audience, or barrage balloons outside a cinema. This presence was a constant reminder of the war, which framed the experiences by constantly altering the points of reference for the listener.

There are two important conclusions to make regarding the presence and influence of war in the musical experience. Firstly, it is striking how few of the listeners directly mention the Second World War in their writing, despite the evidence that it could affect every element of their experience. This is particularly noticeable in Bradley's bulletins. His evidence suggests that during the war there existed an altered state of normality, where musical experience gained a new set of performance and environmental standards and expectations that were framed by a nostalgia and longing for the pre-war equivalent. In many of Bradley's experiences, for example, listening took place in this altered, war-tinted but otherwise ordinary and uneventful context (see Chapter 3). Similar examples can be found in every chapter of this thesis. The routine element of daily wartime musical experiences suggests that the Second World War had little influence across the majority of the experiences studied. The presence of the war is therefore diluted and more indirect, perceived and presented as something lacking, rather than something physically intrusive.

The Introduction questions how the everyday experience of music related to the popular aural icons of World War Two that represented the political ideals of the cultural and political intelligentsia, projecting images of the 'people's war' and the power of music. The important distinction is that these everyday experiences of wartime normality were not *about* the war, and do not resonate ideologically: the listeners observed and reported without special significance being accorded to their experiences. Very little attention has been given to such everyday experiences in the current scholarship, and they are deserving of greater consideration. Further historical study of listening could illuminate the musical lives of other wartime geographical or social communities with very different kinds of everyday experiences, such as those listeners engaged in war-work in the military or factories, or living in regional, 'provincial' areas of Britain.

The second important conclusion is that the presence of war brings into question the popular concept of escapism that is often closely tied to the power of music in popular memory. Some listening environments such as the cinema lend themselves more obviously to escapism through the nature of both venue and film content (as explored in Chapter 4). However, escapism is a notion equally often applied to experiences of classical music that held deep meaning or significance for the listener(s), whether personal or shared (as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5). In this cultural environment, escapism is implied through engagement on a purely musical level, wherein an experience transcended the new state of being and the lowered environmental and performance standards, and provided something for which the listener longed. This thesis has, however, demonstrated that for the majority of the experiences conscious escapism from the war was not a relevant notion for the listeners. They did not choose to evaluate their listening in terms dictated by World War Two, or contrastingly, they accepted or disregarded the effect it had on their experience. Bradley's brief observation of bombing in 1944 offers an example of the latter (see Chapter 3). Moreover, where it can be discerned, escapism held a complex, nuanced position within the meaning and value of the experiences, entwined with broader ideological gestures. This is nowhere more evident than in the discussions of Hess at the National Gallery in Chapters 3 and 5.

2. The nature of the listening experience

The second focus of the thesis, establishing the nature and form of listening experiences, is also closely tied to these conclusions, and to the influence of the Second World War more generally. The war has proven a useful analytical frame for conceptualising experiences of music because it highlighted and disrupted the elements that combined to form and influence them. As Bradley repeatedly demonstrated, disruption is a powerful distraction to an experience and moves the attention of the listener to the environmental context, thus illuminating it. For example, the uncultured behaviour of some wartime audiences frequently annoyed Bradley and detracted from

his engagement with the music. The thesis also argues that listening in wartime brought a heightened awareness to the listener (and equally to the researcher) of the nature of their experience: through the altered standards of everyday experience and the reflection of this in writing, and the desire for experience and engagement that transcended this normality. Lewis's desire for a Hollywood-inspired musical lifestyle is an interesting example of this when compared to his review of a local variety concert, as argued in Chapter 4.

This second focus formed a prominent part of the analysis within this thesis, through which every element of the experiences was considered for what it revealed about the differences and similarities between the preoccupations and attitudes of the listeners. The value of this focus is evident. The study of individual experience is rewarding, revealing a multitude of previously undiscovered details about the reality of wartime life that other sources cannot (or chose not to). Bradley's bulletins are a particularly rich source of this 'peripheral' data, giving captivating details of the comfort of venues, lunchtime sandwich bars, audience behaviour, appearances of performers, and the reference tools he used. Equally, the description of rousing patriotic singing after an 'eve-of-war' dance (see Chapter 4) provides an illumination of the social experience of music that the literature on dancing or popular music does not convey. These details in turn created a frame of reference for his responses, by showing how far from an ideal of concert-going or musical experience the reality of war lay, and where the value of the experience was found. As demonstrated in Chapters 1 and 3, other scholars have addressed the subject of the nature of listening experiences to an extent, using different methodologies and periods. However, this thesis examines it in a different way by emphasising the historical situation, and as such makes a significant contribution to the understanding of historical listening.

There are two further conclusions of importance here. Firstly, the analysis of the important elements of the experiences has demonstrated how complex the decisions surrounding listening were, in a period when not all music was readily available. For each individual listener it was matter of personal priorities, based on a wide variety of the factors that influenced choice and response, such as expectations, past experiences, venues, repertoire, performers and celebrities. Bradley offers the best example of this decision-making process through the different physical factors, such as venue and comfort, and elements of favoured (or disliked) repertoire and performers that shaped his decisions to attend wartime chamber music recitals over orchestral concerts. Similar conclusions have been drawn in recent audience studies scholarship. There is a striking correlation between the historical listening experience explored here and the concerns of the modern listeners examined in existing audience studies, despite obvious differences in technology and access to music. The clearest connections are between the similar concerns of live music listeners, and what they wanted from their experiences: for example, engagement, quality,

sociability and inspiration. These connections point to the possibility of further cross-disciplinary studies which value the models of listening from both fields, particularly when considering the cultural backgrounds and demographics of different listeners.

Secondly, the idea of listeners' priorities relates back to the notion of normality, escapism and the influence of war. There is a marked difference in the sources studied between the everyday and the exceptional experience. Generally, the listeners studied show little interaction with the ideological values attached to music during and since World War Two, with the notable exception of the reviews of Hess's first National Gallery concert discussed in the Introduction and Chapters 3 and 5. In contrast with reports of everyday listening (and the majority of other observations Bradley made about the gallery's recital series) these reviews were explicitly related to the Second World War. This link points to the ideological basis behind the images. The exceptionality attributed to this event was powerful, and acquired a different kind of shared meaning through the mythologizing of the music, event and audience. It is steeped in ideological value as a popular and persevering musical image. The importance given to this event is evident in the bending of conventional reporting style and content (particularly the admission of emotion), and the prioritisation of very different elements of the experience. However, it is only one experience of the many studied, and the evidence suggests that the popularity of such images is because of this striking contrast with the everyday and the new normality of lowered standards and quality: they glamorously transcended wartime normality; fulfilled the longing for quality; and appealed to higher cultural aims. Moreover, these images resonate because they are defined by their relationship with the Second World War rather than in defiance of it.

3. Thematic considerations

The third focus of this thesis provided the main themes which have threaded throughout the preceding chapters. If the effects of war and the form of individual experiences emphasise the vast diversity and differences between listening experiences and listeners, the third focus highlights their striking similarities. There are several points of common ground that united the listeners studied, which emerged as important conclusions throughout the thesis, particularly engagement and meaning in musical experience, the self-awareness of listeners, and a concern with musical quality.

Firstly, it is evident that deep engagement and meaning in musical experience was found across many different listening environments and activities. For example, despite their different tastes, Bradley and Lewis were deeply engaged with the cultures in which they participated, and responded in encultured ways (with echoes of professional reviews heard in both). Both made the effort to attend events alone specifically to hear the music that was important to them, privileging

the music over the social aspect of attending. Most of the listeners were dedicated to music they loved. All of the experiences studied had meaning and importance shown by their existence in documentation, and the specific value found in their recreation and evaluation. As shown, listening also created other kinds of meaning, whether specifically personal (for example, Lewis's aspirations), or a shared meaning underpinned by the political situation or social obligations of cultural participation.

Secondly, musical taste and an associated sense of identity were a prominent part of how listeners thought about their musical experiences and needs. The preceding chapters argue that the listeners' notions of self-identity within the wider listening public and the various communities in which they participated involved an awareness of the wider events in the musical and wartime landscape. This concept provided another analytical frame of reference, used to explore the listeners' own understanding of the meaning and situation they gave to their experiences, in particular the way they positioned their musical tastes and needs in relation to others with similar or different tastes. As shown, musical taste was an important component of self-identity as a listener, demonstrating discernment, position in cultural society, and the listener's musical values, whether intellectual or emotional. It is striking how specific an individual's taste could be, especially when compared to dominant public tastes. Yet these listeners enthusiastically defended even the most idiosyncratic of tastes, as the listeners who loved part-singing, 'straight piano music' and organ recitals demonstrated in Chapter 2. This is an important example of the contribution of listening experience research in revealing hidden narratives that statistics and popular trends hide in historical literature. Self-awareness enabled listeners to have a sense of authority in their opinions through security in their personal tastes, no matter whether mainstream or niche, and thus a right to discuss them (knowledgeably or not) and make demands and judgements of those who provided the music they experienced.

These notions of identity also had a distinct relationship with the accepted boundaries of genres and listening practices defined by musical authorities during the period. Relating back to the first focus of the thesis, this relationship ties in with the ideological function of both popular and classical music in wartime outlined in Chapter 1, and the growing awareness of the BBC of its listening public as it defined and engaged with 'new' groups of listeners considered central to the war-effort (such as soldiers, war-workers and housewives). As established in Chapter 2, the means through which listeners framed their personal musical needs and desires both engaged with, and exploited, the tension in the delicate ideological wartime balance of genres and communities. By framing themselves in this way, the listeners explored a new means of defining their own worth and position as music-lovers within the wider (imagined) national community of the BBC. Their

value within this community in wartime was a matter of their (often temporary) social status as well as the catholicity and popularity or the high-cultural status of their tastes.

As demonstrated, community was an important aspect of listening experiences. None of these listeners ever truly listened alone. They experienced music surrounded by networks of the communities in which they participated: cinema-goers, chamber music lovers, dancers and radio listeners. Even Lewis and Bradley, although attending without company, were not isolated from their cultural communities. Participation within wider communities was also enacted through appropriate, encultured behaviours and recognition of norms and specialised vocabulary in their writing. This thesis has analysed how the Second World War affected notions of audience and belonging, as well as listening behaviour. The exploration of how identity and taste were carefully mediated through writing and language has been an important contribution of this thesis. Every listener mediated their experiences through their knowledge and sense of taste and community, and expressed this in writing with varying transparency, dependent on the purpose and intended audience of their report. Use of specialist vocabularies, styles and content appropriate to the culture with which they identified, and the struggle some listeners had in expressing themselves (especially evident in Chapter 2) demonstrate that these were important markers by which they defined themselves.

Thirdly, there is the unified consideration given by a variety of listeners to the notions of quality in music. A concern for 'good' music (however listeners chose to define that) and for the best performances is noticeable irrespective of the individual listener's taste in music. Classical, light and popular genres held different notions of quality, related to the purpose for which individuals listened and influenced by the wider access to better quality music that celebrity culture and technologies for musical experience provided. Notably, this was often most strongly defined in opposition to other genres and was related to the popularity and availability of different types of music to the listening public. As suggested in Chapter 2, this has strong implications for questions of musical literacy and appreciation, and the broader concepts of morality and national values.

In summary, this thesis is a celebration of the individual. It demonstrates the insights that the study of individual experience of listening to music offers to historical scholarship, through a new perspective that sits alongside and intertwined with the wider audiences, popular trends and prevailing narratives of historical literature. The Introduction first referenced the idea that the variety and diversity of individual musical experience resembles a kaleidoscopic existence of 'constantly varying patterns, difficult to pin down'. The journey this thesis has taken through the musical landscape of wartime Britain shows just how varied, complex and nuanced these patterns were. Perhaps the best way to describe them is as two interlocking strands that merge the public provision of music with the individual experience: a careful balance of public and individual; of

tastes, genres and communities; popular images and everyday listening routines. They all comprised the kaleidoscope that formed the experience of listening to music in wartime Britain.

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